

the SCREEN WRITER

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K I S K A J O U R N A L

LEONARD SPIGELGASS

[In the late Spring of 1943, former Lt. Col. Spigelgass, then a Major, was assigned to the Force which was scheduled to make the assault on Kiska. The Signal Corps provided a crack unit of technicians, augmented by three smaller units. Spigelgass was in charge of this photographic group. The entire force completed its training at Fort Ord, sailed for Adak in the Aleutians, underwent maneuvers there, and waited for the attack on Kiska. On the 15th of August, 1943, the attack began. By the night of the 16th, it had become quite clear that the enemy had fled.

The journal which Lt. Col. Spigelgass kept of those weeks is presented here as a running record of a unique experience and his own spur-of-the-moment reactions to events. — THE EDITORS.]

JULY 22, 1943: We sailed at five from San Francisco — on the Grant, a German vessel seized in the last year. It's dirty, blue-grey.

LEONARD SPIGELGASS, screen writer and former studio story editor, is back writing screenplays after distinguished service in the Army.

Tonight, after dinner, I walked the top deck wearing my life preserver and regained, for a few minutes at least, the academic sense of shipboard.

Last night, as the troops loaded in the strange white light of our baby spots, and our cameras ground, I felt that I was on the Universal backlot, making Princess O'Hara . . .

And there were the realities of Fort Ord, the strange drive up that day with Holly and Don . . . the wonder of driving a jeep, of firing a gun for the first time in my life, and having a sense of exaltation when I hit the target.

Emotion is almost completely lacking — for it is difficult to be emotional when you've lugged that rucksack off and on a troop train, marched down a deck at two in the morning, found the most appalling quarters. There is only time to be tired — and, if there is some time left over, it is to be mad and say curt, one-syllable words. For no conversation, no

JULY 26, 1943: Outside of photographing the Divine Services on Sunday and the prizefights in the afternoon, we have done no work. But the ship itself is a job in a way. The water is now rationed and the exasperation of trying to find a basin to shave in, or take a bath — even with scalding hot salt water — or the meals — or something — or the dirt of this cabin, or some of the hideous aggravation I've been having.

The chief thing on my mind is the attitude towards me, engendered now beyond any question by severe anti-Semitism. At Ord, Lt. Col. C----- was potted one night. As I came out of the Officers' Mess, he hiccupped and said — in front of the other officers, "Let's keep quiet. Here comes the REAL enemy!" I made a feeble joke, not sure what he meant. In fact, it never occurred to me that he meant anything at all, until he drunkenly weaved after Lt. L----- and myself, and asked if we were Talmud boys. Then he began an elaborate apology which lasted through dinner at the Officers' Club, in which he made such statements as these, "You're gentlemen, now, you Jews, and we accept you. But why is it that most of the trouble we have with privilege-seekers occurs with Jews? Why don't Jews get in the fighting army? I like Jews personally, but

most of the Army doesn't, and you'll have to mend your ways or else"

Now, obviously, under the circumstances, I could have preferred charges against him, but it would have availed nothing, and would certainly have interfered with the efficiency of this organization. I could not do that — even though I suspected that his attitude was not entirely individual.

I had had trouble with Lt. K----- from the beginning. His manner was insolent and has continued to be and all my efforts to take him into camp have been fruitless.

This is not all. A Navy commander, out of his deep hurt that the Japanese war is a B one, told me at coffee the other morning that it is the Jews who are forcing us to fight Hitler and the Germans, people with whom, he asserts, we could get on well. Noticing apparently the funny look on my face, he asked if I were a Jew, and when I nodded, he got up from the table, said that he had no intention of taking back his remark, and left

This is still not all. On board is a Maj. C----- . He's young, good-looking, snotty. His attitude has been cold and overbearing and only our sameness of rank prevents him from inflicting details on me and my unit. I was told today by young Lt. R-----, who has been catching hell from G-----, that he said "Forget Spigelgass. He's a dirty Jew bastard." This is still not all. Lt. Q-----, who heads one of the other units presumably under my control and whom I sent out to cover a practice cruise, called me here the day the ship sailed to demand back one of his men and cameras, both of which I had taken because I felt the efficiency of the operation called for it. On his side is the fact that Col. T----- never issued the proper orders to these units explaining my position but, nevertheless, it should be clear to Q----- that I'm considered the boss by the General here. But that didn't matter. He was absurdly cocky on the phone, and I had to go GI and tell him off.

Perhaps I have been wrong to assume that you can handle people the way you do in civilian life — as partners in a job, the importance of which should be obvious. It is not — to Q----- or to A----- or to G----- . They are amateurs, who have power over men

— and bastards they are to them — and they care nothing for the finished job. They care only for themselves — to “make” First Lieutenant, or Captain, to lick the boots of the superior officers.

Now, clearly, this is not important in itself — but terribly important as a symptom. To be shocked by ignorance is foolish; to be sentimental and make all the pat phrases about going off to fight the very things which exist in the forces that fight them, is also foolish. To try to find some method of education and enlightenment, to prove that self-interest lies in curbing these fantastically destructive jealousies is the only possibility — and I don't know what that is. I must say I'm upset tonight — even though I had V----- and P----- in here, talking, and the conversation came around to labor and economics, and, as simply as I could, I explained certain facts, which apparently startled them. V----- is a small theatre owner, unable to see that he fits into a pattern, determined to maintain his right to individual ownership. Still he drank up facts. P-----, a keenly sensitive, deeply religious man, with a logical mind, is now a convert to liberalism, I think . . .

It's ten o'clock and we're six days out somewhere in the Pacific, the ship blackened, so that only the masts are visible against the sky. The loudspeaker is warning the watch to change, and that it is now Condition Two — which might mean almost anything. Rumors are flying that there is a Japanese task force approaching us, but I doubt it. It seems too pat. Of course, we have an escort of only one destroyer, which, well-equipped with radar though it may be, seems hardly enough for two Generals and an Admiral.

Major D-----, who apparently is a good guy, eager to get into the picture-business after the war, took us up to his cabin for a slug of Scotch two nights ago, and the General came in. We chatted, and I told him something of my film-as-a-weapon routine. It seemed to go well — even agreed that we might have a plane to take the film back after Kiska is taken. From what I can gather, they expect a hell of a fight for the island.

It will be up to me to decide what men are to go where, which with what wave, which to risk more and which to risk less. This is a responsibility I cannot share, and one which cannot be made on

the basis of personality or friendship but purely on the basis of efficiency . . . I do not relish the prospect, but then I am charged with a mission, and I must do it . . .

I wonder, parenthetically, if any picture is worth even one life . . .

I guess it's time to go to bed. My eyes are closing and I've got that strange nausea that comes from the horrible food and Mounds and Love Nests and Fig Newtons. But they taste good — and familiar. And what is familiar is the most important thing of all.

AUGUST 2, 1943: I'm sitting in a Quonset hut on Adak. It's half-past-one. It's raining, though why I should be surprised at that, I don't know, for it's always raining. I've taken to walking around in it with unconcern, and it's becoming ordinary to see men doing all the normal things in the pouring rain.

We photographed the General and his staff in a meeting in the middle of the Pacific, with live sound, unstaged and unposed, and I was pretty excited about it. I guess that's the first time in history that anything like that has been recorded.

From the ship we could see tremendous activity ashore, and the trucks along the makeshift roads seemed like miniatures. The whole thing looked like a set for a Gable picture, and perhaps that isn't a bad idea . . .

In any case, we took pictures of our entrance into the harbor — and, on the dock, we saw Gen. M----- and Gen. J----- waiting, which made it essential for us to get to shore. Again Maj. K----- stood in the way, said he had orders that nobody was to go onto the pier. I insisted; he conferred with the General, and I had my first small victory. Ashore we went and photographed . . .

Great vistas. Mountains hidden by clouds, breaking through occasionally. The sea almost black. The island a mass of mud. But most important of all, tremendous activity. Huts and pyramidal tents placed strategically all over the island.

The airport a masterpiece of engineering. Thirty thousand men here. And all this since last September, when there was nothing here but one trapper. A breathtaking business. Hundreds of weath-

er-beaten trucks, most of them with a red circle on the windshield, denoting that they have no brakes. Bulldozers, tractors, tanks, snow jeeps, regular jeeps, piers being built. Installations added to. Munitions piling up. And overhead constantly the B-24s and B-25s going to or returning from the Kiska run, protected by their fighters. This is completely a military installation, under military law, and there are only seven women.

What Freud would say about the sex life of the population is not for me to speculate upon

I must tell Col. K----- that every unit must have a top director or writer with high rank along. A man must have an eye on one of these jobs or he's worse than useless. I begin to see why so much of photography has been so silly and repetitious.

At a Canadian Section, we found a photographer from the Grierson bunch who buttonholed me for a job with the Capra unit. Then I met the Brigadier and asked if we might photograph him. His dialogue was written by Lonsdale. He thought the pictures might be a little "ultra," and when I conned him out of that and suggested we photograph inside his tent, he thought that would be too "chic." But his men are tough, and picturesque in their berets and antler insignia.

Why don't we do things like that? Give our men a sense of pride in their uniforms by making them a little more theatrical? Obviously the Canadians have great swank, all five thousand of them . . .

As we went back aboard the ship I heard the skipper say to his second officer, "It appears that we may have four or five extra for dinner." He was irritated, too. I discovered the appalling fact that we were all to go ashore, kit and kiboodle, and that Maj. G----- had neglected to tell us. My men had to bring the stuff up from their quarters below first, and then pack their own rig, and we were the last off the ship . . .

AUGUST 5, 1943: Again I was interrupted in the middle of that last sentence by a summons which took me and a crew off on a yacht with Generals D----, S-----, and Y----- to photograph the practice landing exercises on Big Sitkin.

To get back to the original landing: we took off in our truck and repaired to the area where our tentage was to be put up. And up it went, despite the fact that none of the men had ever done it before. It blew down; tempers were ragged. I myself have rarely had such a sense of desolation, for there seemed nothing I could do. It was all the worse because personally I was quartered up in a Quonset hut, way on top of a slippery hill. It was warm at least and not too unpleasant but I felt like a prize heel with the other officers and men forced to stay in that miserable, dank tent — forced, too, to eat in the pouring rain, which made that March thing in Los Angeles a few years ago look like a spring shower. And occasionally the sun would peep through in a kind of melancholy yellow, though the rain persisted. Well, I went back to my hut, and lay down for fifteen minutes to think it out — and got mad — mad at H-----, mad at everybody. And I went down and told D----- so, told the General, told W-----, told everybody I could that I would not bring the equipment ashore, that it would rust and rot, that it would be useless.

Their ironic reply was that we would certainly have to undergo the same risks on Kiska. I pointed out that I realized that, but that I wanted something to risk it for — that it was silly to put the stuff and the men through this kind of damp rot needlessly now.

I must have been eloquent, for I won, and got a Quonset hut away from W-----. The men stayed in the tents that night, and we moved to this extraordinary joint the next morning. It is a roof with stoves, and nothing more.

We've built a straddle trench, though I must say I hurry through my needs with great dispatch. It is not pleasant to go to the toilet in a driving rain in full view of an airport. But it is even less pleasant not to.

I washed my towels and underwear (having reached the bottom of the pile) in water heated on the stove, and rinsed out in a drizzle outside. The stuff is now hanging near the stove on the ropes I use to tie the bed-roll to the rucksack, and I look at it with great satisfaction. I now know why maids want more money, and I feel they've all been underpaid . . .

We found the yacht tied up next to a Dutch freighter. It wasn't easy to board in a heavy ground swell, but we got on — and it was worth it. The yacht was owned by the Zellerbach family, and it's a great tribute to toilet paper, the profits of which built it — luxurious, trim, and still retaining all its features. The government bought it for use in Alaskan waters, and it is used mostly by General C-----. It had staterooms and black-and-gold baths and a steward.

We discovered after a conference with the General that we could bring the men aboard, and so we went back for the equipment. I have done easier things.

Found a Maj. K----- and some other officers, both army and navy, all of whom instantly grabbed me and showed me pictures of their babies — whom they had never seen, all born after they had been assigned to the Alaskan Theatre. (MENTAL NOTE: Why can't the War Department get its domestic units to photograph all babies born after their fathers entered foreign service? It would be a morale booster beyond belief. That's all they talk about)

On Monday, we went out on a launch to the Grant to pick up the equipment. They got an LCI to call for us, and we had the pleasant job of transporting those heavy boxes of film and those delicate cameras down a gangway, onto a craft that shipped water. When we got to the floating dock, we had to get the stuff out in a hurry because another craft had to land some people. Then we had to get it off the float up onto the navy dock — again in a hurry.

All through this I worked with the men, carrying and lifting, pressing into service some enlisted men on the dock from time to time, enjoying the luxury of a major's leaves for the first time. When we got the stuff on the dock, a Navy captain ordered it off at once, and quite rightly, for they were loading ammunition on a destroyer and needed the space desperately. I had to get another truck — our two-and-a-half tonner not supposed to call for us until four — and hauled it on. Then back to the areas, and unloading the truck, down those slippery hills to our hut.

I'm the boss in a sense I've never known before, and I've discovered that it has tremendous responsibilities along with it.

Tonight, for instance, when, to accommodate the rest of the unit that arrived, I had to move most of the enlisted men back to the tents. I had to crawl over the hills in the dark to make certain that they were warm and comfortable and protected. If I don't look out for them, nobody else will — and if they are not looked out for, I will have no personnel. Every cough, every pimple, is something that rates my personal attention — and they're all like my children, even the lieutenants. For, in this force, and perhaps in the entire Army, they can go to superior officers only through me. I am "Channels" and, brother, I am used day and night.

It's eleven-thirty and I've got to be up at six for chow, and to meet Capt. J----- of the Bell, and G----- of the Zeilen, and today I was told that the entire operation has been moved up from four weeks to as many days. So I'd better go to bed. I'll try to get back to this tomorrow or the next day.

AUGUST 7, 1943: We sailed in the morning, in the wake of a tremendous convoy of destroyers and transports, all filled to the water line with soldiers. The Canadians were participating, too — and the General told me that we could not release any shots of them until the news of their participation was announced by Ottawa. Apparently the pitch is that this is the closest joint United Nations operation yet, men of the two countries in the same regiment, without distinction. If it fails, obviously, the story could be a blow; if it succeeds, it will be announced by Churchill or Roosevelt. At least General Y----- told me this, but I'm not certain how much he knows; he seems like a little old gent tagging along for the ride . . .

The landings went on through the night. The next morning, we lifted anchor and went to another beach for another landing. The General went first with Col. S----- and the Colonel was thrown in the water and almost killed. Lanning and Widmayer and I went next. The boatman decided that it was impossible to land the boat on the beach again in the heavy ground swell, and so he decided to land us on the rocks half-a-mile up the shore. We banged up against the rocks, splintered the boat, but —

AUGUST 11, 1943: We're aboard the Grant again — got on yesterday — waiting to sail against Kiska.

We made the beach that morning, did some photographing, got back to the ship and sailed back to Adak . . . Lanning came over that night, brought Lt. Fleischer of Special Services with him, and I learned from him that Clark Andrews was on the island. So, of course, we took the jeep over, clasped each other heartily, and went to see his broadcast.

In addition to his Air Corps duties — and they will include making a blow-by-blow record of the attack in a plane, — Clark takes care of the little radio station here. He had a broadcast from the theatre which is an amazing example of human ingenuity — lighting fixtures made from screening; a curtain from parachute cloth, a row of upholstered reserved seats for the staff from mattresses. I also saw one of the few women on the island, a nurse, who quite clearly can have her pick of dates. Then we sat and shmoosed until late, and I took the jeep back as far as I could, then walked half-a-mile in the dark against the cliffs.

AUGUST 15, 1943: The landing in the south sector was unopposed, which means there will probably be heavy action in the north where we land. We will be preceded, of course, by the special service troops and a number of battalions, but we will be early enough to see the show . . .

It's not the way I would write it for a script. Everybody is cheerful, apparently unconcerned, even I. There's a deep, underlying thing, of course — the waiting for news, so like election returns, the little groups discussing whether the apparent lack of enemy resistance is good or bad, the bets on whether there will be a counter-attack tonight, the concern -----

Things have grown serious overnight. There is no news, and the northern sector was to have been invaded this morning. We wait almost without breathing for news. Are there or aren't there Japs in the North? Why don't they show themselves? And is it an

advantage or a serious threat? I disagree with the pessimists; I think they're communicating their own lack of personal ease into their thinking, that they want to pass the blame on to somebody, if there is to be blame.

We're going in the A boat, the first one ashore, with Worden of AP, Annabell of UP, Edward Lanning of a security company, and the Red Cross people.

Strange that the first landing should be made by the non-combatants, but in some strange way, without consulting each other, we've all insisted upon it. And I think it's due to the fact that we all feel as badly equipped for one as for another; thus we might as well do the most dramatic, and see the most valuable

The only way I can tell about the way I feel is to say that it was like that first day I went to work at Fox on Western Avenue; I had the same apprehension about Sheehan that I now have about the Japs. But actually I'm not very worried — and this despite the fact that I've a complete sense of reality, that I do NOT feel it's happening to three other guys. The important thing is to do something, not just sit, which is why I'm at the typewriter.

I keep being amazed at the way the cliches of behavior work out, have merit, make things possible

Outside there is a terrible fog, and the air is full of a thin, penetrating drizzle. Obviously no air support today either, and I'd rather counted on those friendly B-24s.

The engines of the ship have begun to hum as though they're used to working again, and there's a slight roll. These are, I suppose, mined waters, and clearly there must be submarines about . . .

Everybody's face and voice seem quite real — and I dreamt honest and accurate dreams last night, sleeping in my clothes

Perhaps, if everything goes well, I can be leaving for home within ten days

I'd like to. I'd like to very much

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T H E H U G H E S M E T H O D

RICHARD G. HUBLER

I UNDERSTAND from the advertising — which I read as avidly as I do any other fairy tale — that Howard Hughes' *The Outlaw* is making screen history.

At this time the claims of the copy are as substantial as the charms of the leading lady: in the first six theatres played, from Utah to Georgia, every existing record established by any picture at the box-office has been broken. This has continued, *ad infinitum*. This is nice. I am not sure what it proves.

Possibly it proves there is a new and profitable way to make motion pictures — what might be called *The Hughes Method*. This is the engineering approach as opposed to the hack, artistic and commercial approaches. It consists of viewing every production problem in the light of the laws of physics or dynamics.

The illustrations of this method are probably largely apocryphal. But they serve the purpose of illuminating this fresh procedure. For instance, at one point the heroine (Jane Russell) was lashed between two trees. Neither the camera angle nor the lighting could do justice to her unique qualities. "A simple engineering question," Hughes is reported to have said. "Bring me my drafting board." In a few minutes he sketched out a design for a light aluminum brace to bring out the desired effect in high relief.

RICHARD G. HUBLER, author of half-a-dozen books, the latest of which, *I've Got Mine*, was brought out last month by Putnam's, spent the war years in the Photographic Services of the Marine Corps and is now under contract to a major Hollywood studio.

This was strapped to Miss Russell's back, she was re-lashed, and the shot was made successfully.

At the first showing before the Hays (sic) Office, it is said that a scene showed the hero, Billy the Kid (Jack Beutel), and Miss Russell with a rumpled bed between them, talking to Billy's pal, Doc Holliday (Walter Huston). The dialogue supposedly ran thus: "You," said Beutel, "took my horse. So I took your girl." His remarks were given weight by the attractions of Miss Russell sharply silhouetted with back lighting.

The Hays Office objected. Not to the scene, but to the dialogue which they deemed off-color. Suggestions? Certainly. The memorandum is rumored to have read: "Change dialogue to following: 'Tit for tat.' " Needless to say this was not included in the final showing, in spite of the censorial edict. It came out: "You borrow from me, I borrow from you." Before a closed door.

In the above case, the engineering was undoubtedly more on the psychological side than the mechanical. However, in a barroom scene, the full genius of Hughes came to flower. He wanted a full shot of the sheriff, Pat Garrett (Thomas Mitchell), having a gun shot out of his hands.

This was accomplished by wiring the sheriff's sawed-off by electrical contact to the trigger of the hero's revolver. The butt was broken and lightly glued together with a small charge of powder sealed in it. A concealed bit of piping ran out to one side to carry off any smoke. A large spring, out of camera range, was also rigged to the trigger of the hero and attached by wire to the shotgun.

Thus, when the hero fired: (1) the powder went off, breaking the butt; (2) the spring jerked the gun out of Mitchell's hand. The scene was complete and vivid in its illusion.

Hughes also objected to the excellent pronunciation of Mitchell. Dissatisfied with the sound-track, he doctored the sheriff's lines with a scissors. In a word like "gentleman," for example, he cut out the single "t," thus successfully reducing it to a colloquial "gennelman." He beat the already-battered Tschaikowsky's Fifth to death in his Meccano scoring.

The legend also adds that Hughes put some of his actors on

realistic rubber horses, complete with sweat and heaving muscles; that he took sixty-one closeups of Miss Russell's lips, pursed for kissing — a perfectionist stratagem which left the unlucky heroine feeling like an eggbeater with elephantiasis.

Actually, *The Outlaw* is a picture which may easily commence a new cycle — the mammiferous Western. What the censor hullabaloo was about is still a mystery to anyone who sees it, outside the gents'-room set. Hughes and his automatic preoccupation with the female bosom (as with Jean Harlow in *Hell's Angels*) might be called on only one point: his establishment of equiphilism — the unnatural love for a horse — as a departure point for plot and motive.

Historically, of course, the whole of this leisurely Western — well-photographed but cut like a maternity dress — is a thorough and mechanistic perversion of Southwest history as to facts. (The portrayal of Billy the Kid as a moronic, stupid juvenile delinquent with a genius for pulling a gun is a notable portrait, however.)

A scientific, detached way of looking at motion pictures can bring new hope to the jaded producers of Hollywood. To be absolutely proof, it needs only to be injected with the old formula for a hypo: when SOME is good, MORE is better. Add to this the conviction that what has succeeded in the past will undoubtedly succeed in the future (something that is apparent in the number of re-makes now in progress) and the program is without a peer.

Take Hughes' obvious line of thought: Westerns and sex pictures always make the most and most consistent money. Why not combine the two? This, of course, is also the trend of another over-opulent producer, David O. Selznick, whose middle initial, it has been suggested, should have stood for Oscar. This is engineering reduced to constant factors.

The Outlaw was aged in the can for three years, but this is evidently not a part of the method. Arguments with various state and local censors evidently unwittingly produced this effect. But it is not a bad idea for the future. Certainly age can do to acetate what it does to Bourbon and cheese.

This being the case, I suggest the following. The Hughes

Method has already proved its worth. Sex and adventure, Freud and Adler, are the surefire themes. The thoughts of the audiences, long upon legs, have now turned back to the Oriental ideas of sex-appeal, namely the pectoral development of the form divine. Heroines need not be able to act, they need only be robustious.

Once theme (one of the two or, better, an adroit combination of the two) is decided upon and the heroine selected according to rigid standards, then the rest is merely, as Hughes put it, "an engineering question." If the actor is a nance, merely lower his voice in the sound recording register; if the heroine is a little *passée*, pile in the filters; if the animals are fractious, simulate them in rubber; bring all the vague creative efforts which combine to make motion pictures under the aegis of engineering.

There is nothing human under the sun which science cannot do better. Like Hamlet, Hollywood can be content to be bounded within the walnut shell of complete illusion. The Grand Canyon is no farther off than the nearest model set. Fantasy dangles from wires against a black velvet drape and drama waits upon the atomic bomb.

The Hughes Method of dispassionate production has a good deal to recommend it. Nepots might be knocked in the head and stuffed, then inserted into the proper chairs in the proper offices. Temperament would become a thing of the past since a robot Gable or a mechanical Bette Davis could emote just as well.

Pictures could assume a universal standard of morals and dramatic appeal, thus doing away with all codes. They might be monotonous, but this would hardly be an objection any more than a standard grade of peas in the can would be objectionable. What the movie audiences would come to expect would be what they got, by God!

This would also tend to lighten the burden of the publicity and advertising gentry of the industry. Eventually they could be dispensed with and the whole works run by a machine which will be invented by the International Business Machines Co. The producer will yawn and hand a card to his secretary who will drop it into a hopper. The card will contain a rough estimate of what the pro-

ducer thinks of the stature of his opus. The machine will wriggle twice, bounce once and produce copy and art complete. Replacements for words like COLOSSAL, STUPENDOUS, GIGANTIC, and other superlatives, will be instantly available at low prices for gross orders. This will be made possible by IBM not having to provide words like "lousy" and "stinko."

This whole scheme, which I have designated as The Hughes Method, will obviously throw a lot of people out of work. Well, I have solved that problem, too.

They will be paid for going to see motion pictures.



AN ADOLESCENT LOOKS AT FILMS

In the Straus Junior High School in Brooklyn, one of the teachers is encouraging the students to express themselves through the medium of the Movie and Radio Appreciation Club. From the essay of 14-year-old Frieda Denenmark come these comments:

"Schools can hardly ask for a better partner than Hollywood has been on many occasions. Any science or literature teacher would be glad to have his pupils interested in movies like Mme. Curie, Pasteur, Yellow Jack, the Dickens and Mark Twain novels, and a lot of others. History teachers appreciate Wilson, Northwest Passage, Union Pacific, Abe Lincoln and Gone With The Wind. Besides, the children would probably be better students.

"If you think deeply about it, you would realize that educational films first must be entertaining. An audience seeing *Going My Way* will have two hours of enjoyment and also a lesson in humanity, religion and tolerance without even realizing it. Imagine what we would gain if we had pictures like *Saludos Amigos* about every country.

"I wish to make a suggestion to the United Nations. Before any meeting or conference, every member should be shown newsreels of the horrible truth of war, of the Dachaus and Buchenwalds, of the gas-chambers, of destruction and devastation the world over, and of robot kings of death that fall from the night sky with sound following after.

"Show them all this and total peace may be truer reality than it is now."

— Motion Picture Letter (Issued by the Public
Information Committee of the Motion Picture
Industry)

THE SOVIET FILM INDUSTRY

An analysis by

KONSTANTIN SIMONOV

[The following is a record of an informal discussion held under the auspices of the Hollywood Writers' Mobilization and the Screen Writers' Guild, at which the noted Soviet writer, Konstantin Simonov, during his visit to Hollywood as a guest of the State Department, answered questions regarding the film industry in his country. Dalton Trumbo was chairman of the seminar. The interpreter was Bernard Koten. The editors are indebted to Miss Lee Benedict for this transcript.]

QUESTION: I want to know about such things as the Motion Picture Institute in the Soviet Union and similar institutions.

ANSWER: The Film Institute works under the Ministry of Cinematography, situated in Moscow, and it has the following sections: a school for directors, one for film actors, script writers, stage set designers and a section on the history of the film. Students are accepted into the Institute on the same basis as other institutes of higher learning, but for entrance into the actors' division, directors', script writers' and set designers' divisions there are additional tests of the applicants' creative abilities. The Institute itself gives a general education in the humanities. The specialized work in the acting, writing and directing fields is conducted through small groups and work shops which are led by well-known, important people in the field. The course is a five-year one, and on completion the students take the regular state final examinations in addition to special examinations. The set designers, for instance, in their

KONSTANTIN SIMONOV is the world-famed author of the novel *Days and Nights*, and also wrote the screenplay of the film made from his book.

final year produce a film. If the sets are considered good, they pass their final test. For the actors this final test is playing an important featured role in a film. For the director this final test consists of either a short which he will direct by himself or working under another director as a creative assistant on a full-length film. For the script writers it is a full-length feature script accepted for production. That describes in general the organizational work of the Institute. For instance, a film just finished, a full-length color film based on a Ural folk tale, had in its cast a young girl who played the feature role, who was playing this role as her diploma project for the term; the sets were designed by a young set designer who was also offering this as his diploma project.

QUESTION: What is the relation of a script writer to the finished product in actual production? How does he work; with a director all the way through?

ANSWER: There are varied points of view on that question in the Soviet Union and as a matter of fact there is a quarrel among people as to which is the better method. Some directors prefer to get a finished script and then do with it as they please. But the tendency among the script writers at present is quite the contrary. A great number of script writers have refused to write scripts until they are informed as to the director with whom they will be working. I, for instance, have set the condition that from the day I begin to write the script I know with what director I am going to be working, or else I do not write the script. In the writing of half the scripts being written, the work is so organized that the director works from the very beginning as consultant with the writer, and then when the film finally reaches the point of shooting, the script writer turns into a consultant, working with the director, as the director worked with him when he was writing the script. What especially helps them in this way is the recently organized script writers' workshop or studio. This organization is now responsible for 75% of the scripts written and used by the studios. The work is organized in this way: at the head of this studio or workshop is a council composed of well-known writers and directors. This council meets daily and discusses finished scripts or plans for scripts. Or,

if a writer finds himself in some difficulty in the middle of his script, he may ask the council for a discussion of it. This council also discusses the question of what kind of scripts ought to be written, what books ought to be screened. This writers' workshop has its own funds, large funds. It pays the writers for their scripts, buys books for screening, and in turn sells ready, finished scripts to the studios. It sells scripts at such rates as to cover all the expenses for running the shop.

QUESTION: Who has authority over the script when it is in production?

ANSWER: It is important first to separate the formal from the de facto set of conditions. Formally the script is in the hands of the author alone until it goes into production. As soon as it goes into production the author can introduce corrections or changes only with the consent of the director, and the director has the right to introduce changes only with the agreement of the author. The author has the right to oppose all changes right up to taking the director to court. What happens practically during production, however, . . . the director sometimes introduces changes without the agreement of the author. That was specially true during the war when the authors spent more of their time at the front than in the studios, so it was hard to come to an agreement with them. Conditions of lack of agreement are very rare because the changes introduced by the directors in 90% of the cases are not changes in principle but carry a more or less artistic character. But there have been such cases, such as with the film called *The Circus*. Alexandroff, the director, so twisted up the script that the three authors refused to accept it as theirs and announced that the film was a good film but the script was not theirs and they had their names removed.

QUESTION: What is the size of the enrollment in the Institute? How are they absorbed into the industry?

ANSWER: I think about a thousand students, maybe fewer than that. The greatest number are absorbed into the industry. It is most difficult for those graduated from the directors' division of

the school because on the basis of their present productive capacity they are not producing as many pictures as they should be. And upon graduation often students have to wait three or four years before they can work as directors, during which time they work as assistants.

QUESTION: Does the popularity of the film have any ill effect on the popularity of the legitimate theatre?

ANSWER: Not at all. The whole organization of theatre life is deeply rooted in the country. There are seven hundred theatres with permanent buildings, troupes and repertories.

QUESTION: Do the stage actor and film actor interchange; do they both work in both mediums?

ANSWER: The greatest number of important film actors are stage actors who work both in films and on the stage, but who spend more time in the theatre than in the studios. As an example, the actress who played the part of Zoya, acclaimed by the critics and audiences, got a First Stalin prize. However, with the possibilities of a great screen career before her, she nevertheless went into a theatre to play minor roles so as to get theatrical background. She is very popular; everybody knows her when she walks in the street, but in the theatre she is considered an actress and must be taught and taught and taught some more. That is a typical case.

QUESTION: Has there been any discussion of filming such classics as Shakespeare?

ANSWER: In production of the classics things are much better in the theatre than in films. Sixty percent of all stage productions are classics. Half of these are Russian and half foreign. As far as the films are concerned, most of the classics filmed are in the children's studios — Stevenson, Defoe and Jules Verne. Actually very few classics have been screened, and from my point of view many more should be. In working out our yearly plan last year for this year we included a great number of classics for screening.

QUESTION: What proportion of pictures made are from stories written especially for the screen?

ANSWER: About fifty percent.

QUESTION: The name "producer" is left out of your remarks. Apparently they don't have the problem of the producer at all.

ANSWER: They don't have such problems.

QUESTION: From a practical point of view, is it so that this writers' organization mostly determines what subjects shall be filmed for the coming year?

ANSWER: The Council at the head of the script writers' studio prepares the yearly plans which are presented to the council attached to the Ministry of Cinematography. About half the members of the council are attached to the Ministry of Cinematography. In addition, there are many other members of this latter council — about twenty-one members. They are the most important figures in their fields in the country. This council approves and widens the script writers' plan. In such cases as an argument over whether or not a script which the writers' studio thinks is good and is not wanted by any of the film studios, or arguments over construction of the script, the final decision rests with the council attached to the Ministry of Cinematography. That only happens in very serious cases. The main work of the council attached to the Ministry, which meets weekly, is the discussion of films already produced or being produced. About ninety percent of any of the script problems or questions are decided upon by the script writers' studio. To give you an idea what this council is like, I can tell you what the composition is: the chairman is the Minister of Cinematography. He is the only representative from the administration. The rest of the members are appointed by the government, NOT appointed by the Minister. In this council are the important directors Eisenstein, Romm, Pudovkin; great musicians who have done work for the films; the writers, and two of the best cameramen, two of the best set designers. This council decides all questions related to the art, and it comes to its own conclusions on each picture and then for

separate sections of the film — acting, designing, camera work. In this council are also some of the great actors.

QUESTION: How do writers get paid; by salary or percentage?

ANSWER: The script writer is paid for each film. He does it by contract. He gets from forty to eighty thousand rubles for a film. As soon as he makes the contract, so he can work without worrying, he gets twenty-five percent of this sum. When they begin shooting the film he gets the remaining seventy-five percent. Then if the film is finished and is successful, he gets additional money on the basis of the circulation of the film. If there are a hundred prints made and distributed, he gets fifty percent of his original honorarium. If there are two hundred copies, he gets another fifty percent, and so on, so that the success of the film gives him this additional incentive.

QUESTION: What about rights of the writer in other use of his material? Does he sell only the film rights? Can he sell the film again as a novel or short story?

ANSWER: He sells only the right for screening. The right for publishing remains his. But sometimes they make the condition in the contract that the author does not have the right to have it printed or published until the film has been screened or issued. That happens very rarely. Most of the studios are not much concerned whether or not the script is published.

QUESTION: Does it work inversely? If a studio buys a published novel, is an additional sum paid for that?

ANSWER: The author might either do the script himself or with someone else, in which case he would get all these additional percentage sums, or if he has sold the screen rights he will have gotten twenty or thirty thousand rubles for the screen rights and nothing more.

QUESTION: Does one writer rewrite the script of another? Does the original writer lose control of the script when another writer is assigned?

ANSWER: How can they take it away from him? If I don't want to give it up or have someone finish it, no one can make me

give it up. But in case the script I did turns out to be not so good and they decide something can be done with it, it might be suggested that I must rewrite. But if I say I cannot, it is suggested to me that perhaps I would like So-and-so to help me. If I agree, then we become co-authors and we share the profits and there will be two names on the credit line. That can only be done with my agreement. There are such cases.

QUESTION: Is there any such thing as "adaptation"? Adaptation is a technical word used to indicate preparation of an outline, with the screenplay written by another person.

ANSWER: There is no such system. But something else does occur. For instance, during the war when we were much concerned with the defense of Moscow, the council agreed that a script concerning it was needed, but no one had an outline for such a script. Fifteen of us sat down together for two days and worked out a plan, what you might call an "adaptation." We worked out a plan that was not too bad, and one said, "I will write the script." Ideas aren't sold, they are only given.

QUESTION: I am interested in the compensation of people employed by the studios — the actor, director, writer and cameraman; what is the comparative pay?

ANSWER: The director gets a monthly salary. There are four categories of directors. One category is what might be called "out of category." He gets a personal salary. Eisenstein is in such a category. It (the salary) is unlimited. Then there is the highest category, the first and the second. The salaries vary from two to five thousand rubles a month. When a director finishes a film he gets at the same time a definite sum. This sum is decided upon on the basis of the evaluation of the art work of the film by the council. The council does not record the sum the director ought to get. But if they consider the film an average film, one sum might be paid; if it is an excellent film, another sum is paid the director. This sum varies from thirty to one hundred thousand rubles. That is the system of pay for the directors. There are two types of acting personnel. The

first is the so-called staff actors who get a regular salary. They are required to work a maximum number of days a year, let us say, perhaps ten shooting days a month. For all work beyond that they get overtime. But most of the important actors work in the theatre, too, the greatest number, and they work on contract. Either they make a five-month contract for salary or they make a contract for a picture. That depends solely on their qualifications as actors. Then there are the cameramen and technicians who work on salary. The set designers work on contract.

QUESTION: These technicians, cameramen, etc.; who sets their salaries and what can they do about it if they consider their salaries unfair?

ANSWER: They get a two week testing-out period. After this period they are told they will be hired at such and such a salary. If they agree, they stay on; if not, they go to another place. With the set designers, the artists, their qualifications and art ability decide their salaries and that is decided upon by the various art organizations.

QUESTION: What about trade unions as they exist in America which set working conditions and wage scales?

ANSWER: The principle is the same. I will explain from the point of view as it is worked out in the theatre. In the theatre there is a well-defined norm for the actors' salaries. In a given theatre, ten actors could be of the highest category, fifteen of the next, twenty of the next, forty of the lowest category. And on this basis theatres accept actors for any openings. And if all ten places in the highest category are filled, for instance, and some important actor of the highest category asks to be taken into the group, he will be told, "We would like to have you, but there is no opening, only one in the next category." The actor must decide this himself. If it is an especially good theatre, and the actor wants to come to the theatre just to work there, he will come despite this. These categories are not static; they continually change; an actor can promote himself from one to another. In the case of any misunderstanding or quarrel, say, when an actor might consider that he should be promoted to a

higher category but is not being promoted, he has two ways out. He might apply to the trade union for help. The trade union would have to appoint a qualified commission to examine the whole question. Into this commission would go representatives of the theatre, representatives of the whole director force of the theatres and representatives of the actors' social organizations. This decision will be a compulsory one for the theatre, because if the theatre does not follow the decision made by the trade union, the union takes the theatre to court. But that is rarely necessary. The actor has another avenue of complaint. There is a union, a theatrical society which is purely an arts organization and not a trade union. At its head are the most important directors and actors. If the actor thinks he has been treated unjustly, he can apply to this organization of theatrical workers, asking them to comment upon his treatment. If the organization decides to defend the actor, its authority is so high that usually it will be listened to.

QUESTION: Are the unions in the motion picture field the same as in the theatre — are they the same unions?

ANSWER: They are different. The actors belong to the union of workers in the arts field, the motion picture workers in the cinematographic union. The difference between the trade union, the union of cinema workers and the union of theatrical workers, is that in the trade union you have all workers in the field from the top directors to the scrubwomen, whereas in the theatrical union you would have only actors. The union of writers is an organization of a very special kind. It is, in the main, a creative organization, but it is also an organization which has large funds to work with. It has great literary funds for aid to writers. It concerns itself with summer homes for the writers, rest homes, houses for writers, so that it has both creative and economic functions. But not all writers are members of the Union of Soviet Writers, because the only writers accepted into the Union are those of higher qualifications. The ones that are not members of the Union of Soviet Writers are members of the Union of Publishing House Writers, and they have their professional committees usually attached to the important publishing houses.

QUESTION: How does the Union of Writers function in determining the amount paid for scripts?

ANSWER: The fees for the scripts are set by the government, and the publishing houses have fees also established by the government. There is a great difference between the minimum and maximum fee. In such cases where the writer feels that he is being unjustly paid, he can apply for help to the Union of Soviet Writers. There are very few quarrels on the question of payment for scripts, but on payment for books and articles and magazines there are such discussions. If the Union defends the writer, its authority is great enough for its word to be followed.

QUESTION: What are the wage differentials among different groups in the film industry? What would a stagehand get compared with an actor?

ANSWER: I don't know the salary differentials well enough to comment on them, but let us say the director would get twice as much as an actor in the production of a film, and the script writer would also be getting more than the actor for the production of a film. A cameraman would get a salary not much lower than the director but would not get on the completion of production the additional fee which the director gets. What the propmen and the others get, I don't know. They don't get especially much.

QUESTION: What is the procedure in the event of dissatisfaction with wages? For instance, take the actors in the lowest category; suppose they are dissatisfied with the rate. What appeal do they have?

ANSWER: Take the theatre, for instance. At the head are two people — the Administrative Director and the Arts Director. In deciding any hotly-contested questions, the last word remains with the Arts Director, since in these positions, usually, there are the most important actors, etc., and if there is any argument, certainly the Administrative Director must accept the decision the Arts Director makes. So, if an actor in this lower category considers his salary too low, he will apply first of all to the Arts Director and if the Arts Director decides that his salary should be increased, and if it is possible to increase it, in that theatre, then it is raised. How-

ever, if they don't come to an agreement, the actor can then apply to the trade union and if the union agrees the actor should get a higher salary, they then take the Arts Director to court. But those cases are rare because the life of the theatre depends on agreement.

QUESTION: Suppose several productions in a row turn out badly. Whose decision is it for the removal of the director?

ANSWER: There are such cases. Let us say a director will have made two or three bad films in a row. He will continue to receive his salary but he will usually be so ashamed to eat the government's bread that he will transfer from the films to the theatre. Sometimes he will be told on this basis, "We do not believe you can produce any (good) films. If you want to stay on, work for a period as an assistant director, and we can judge further."

QUESTION: Who, in addition to the writer, receives royalties from the film?

ANSWER: Only the writer.

QUESTION: What happens to the director who fails?

ANSWER: To take a concrete example, a well-known director left for the theatre from the films at his own request after a terrific flop. He became director for a front-line theatre, then director for a whole unit of front-line theatres. Now he is in charge of a group of mobile theatres. There is no employment if he fails there, too; he would have to go then into some other type of work.

QUESTION: I am still trying to tackle the problem of a group action. Suppose not one, but all of the stagehands became dissatisfied. What is their approach toward reaching a higher wage?

ANSWER: In cases where it would be generally conceded that a whole group is being underpaid this question would be raised in government circles and they would raise the salaries on government decision. To take a concrete example: the writers decided their fees for work in magazines and books were not high enough. They continued discussions on that for two years in the trade unions. The Union of Soviet Writers, on its decision that the salaries were too

low, together with the publishers, appealed to the government for raising of their salaries and fees. A commission was established by the government with representatives from these fields and the decision was to double the fees. You will excuse me if I say something that is quite primitive, but I must say it. The whole state budget is organized in the interests of the entire population of the country. Therefore, we cannot always give people the salaries that their work might deserve, and we cannot always give people the salaries which would secure good life for them. This, of course, is regrettable, but it does not provoke any opposition among the people because no one is putting their money into his pockets. At this given moment the government is not able to pay more. It is more important at present to build and restore. For this a tremendous amount of money is needed in capital. Therefore, in the interest of the government's needs, the people reconcile themselves to the conditions. The question of raising salaries is very often put, and if you were to examine Soviet newspapers, you would notice often decrees calling for raising of salaries in tens of different categories, but the question is NEVER categorically put: "Either you raise my salary or I won't work."

QUESTION: Do you get many American films in the Soviet Union?

ANSWER: There are the films that are received to acquaint the small circle of people in the arts with American films, and then the films that are received to be distributed throughout the country.

QUESTION: Why is there that separation?

ANSWER: The smaller circle of people decides which films ought to be bought and distributed. In recent times there were a greater number of American films on the screens in the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, now we have adopted the system of dubbing in voices. I don't like this system. I prefer sub-titles. This dubbing in holds up distribution for a long time; it usually takes six to eight months to dub in a film because the attitude toward dubbing is quite a serious one and great actors are hired to dub in the voices.

They do a very good job but take a very long time at it. I think that the number of American films on our screens will be greatly increased; the whole tendency is to take on more and more of them.

QUESTION: What is the basis for a selection now?

ANSWER: The question of the creative worth of a film, the question of business relations between ourselves and Hollywood. Often when it is felt that there is a great desire for comedies by the Soviet audiences, comedies are bought and put on the screen. Much depends on our own production. It is important to intelligently establish a proportion between the type we are doing and the type we put on the screen from other countries.

QUESTION: Could we get some of the lectures and published materials from the Cinema Institute?

ANSWER: I think so. I can tell you how to arrange for it. You should write a letter addressed to the Head of the Cinema Institute, indicate what you want. I would deliver this letter personally and, knowing him, I know you would get action on it.

QUESTION: We of the Screen Writers' Guild publication have been working on a problem of exchange of information with the English and the French. Would it be possible to have discussion with the Soviet Union on problems of specific needs?

ANSWER: It would be best to write up such requests while I am still here so I can take them back with me. I am sure there are people who would take it upon themselves to write the articles you need and in turn they would probably have questions they would like answers for from you.

QUESTION: How far has the Union of Soviet Writers gone into the question of international copyright and protection of Soviet writers on sale of their work in other countries?

ANSWER: First, I would like to say a few words about authors' rights within the country. Attached to the Union of Soviet Writers is a council which concerns itself with protection of authors' rights. It is a small working council of six people. There is a very large enterprise attached to us over which we have control, which

employs over two thousand people. They work all over Russia. They collect all the royalties on everything produced on the stage, let us say. This is very well organized. These last years there have been no lawsuits at all, because it is considered that the writer will get his due and the organizations, publishing houses, theirs. We have now set the question of establishing a convention for international authors' rights. We did not sign the Berne authors' rights convention. I can't give you the final decision, because it hasn't been made yet, but undoubtedly it will mean making private conventions with each separate country on authors' rights. I am waiting for this impatiently because up to now there has been lack of order on this question. When we did not observe authors' rights in our country, it deprived us of authors' rights outside the country. This question may already have been solved, and definitely will be in the very near future.

QUESTION: I am interested in the exchange of people in larger numbers than is now taking place and would like to know what hurdles have to be overcome.

ANSWER: I am very happy this matter has come up. I have talked with several people already and I think it would be very desirable to have some sort of American-Russian Film Committee established, which would concern itself with these exchanges. I think such a committee should consist of people from all the fields — cameramen, writers, actors, directors, producers, — so it could deal with all questions concerned with cultural and administrative problems and the creative arts. If such a committee were established I think that we would then be able to turn from these fruitless discussions of exchange to practical exchanges. We could concern ourselves with the exchanges of workers, with trips, with the exchange of information, sending over apprentices both here and there. It would make possible the organizing of periodical film festivals and in addition aid in the more intelligent and more rapid exchange of good films between both countries. I am going to insist on such a committee when I get back to Moscow.

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LET THEM BECOME DIRECTORS!

THORNTON DELEHANTY

MANY years ago, when I was highly enamoured of the cinema (to borrow a phrase from those days), I had a talk in New York with Sergei Eisenstein. We were discussing *Potemkin*, and I went into raptures over a particular scene in a park where an old man, sitting wretchedly on a bench, gave way to anguished emotion, the tears streaming down his face.

"Who was that anonymous genius?" I asked. "I shall never forget that performance."

"Anonymous, it is right," Mr. Eisenstein replied. "He never acted before. I pick him up from the street and put him in the picture. That is all."

"But that crying scene —"

"That was a hard time," said Eisenstein. "We try everything to make him cry but he don't. Then we get it. We put a piece of tobacco in his eye. Then, pouf, come the tears."

My shock and disillusionment were abated somewhat when I remembered an episode from my boarding-school days. (I'll get this autobiography over with in a second.) A few cases of pink eye broke out and the kids who got it were sent to the infirmary. We less fortunate ones tried our best to get stricken, but nothing happened until one of us hit on the idea of putting a piece of tobacco in the corner of the eye and removing it after a mild inflammation had set in. Then, with the right degree of apprehension, we

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reported to the doctor, and in no time at all we had joined the blissfully inert. What gave us most satisfaction was the way we had put it over on the authorities. It is only looking back on it now that I realize how much we owed to Bull Durham.

The giving of credit where credit is due is baffling enough in real life, where judgments are personalized and direct, but from the standpoint of a distant critic (a New York critic, say) viewing an agglomerate entity on the screen, it is not only baffling but perilous, not only perilous but foolhardy.

In this controversy between screen writers and the professional reviewers, I can speak only from my own experience, which in one respect is rather special. Unlike my ex-colleagues I have had some eight years of relatively free access to Hollywood studios and to the people who make pictures, and I think these eight years have unfitted me entirely to going back to the kind of criticism I blithely attempted in New York.

As a newspaper reviewer at that time, my knowledge of studio life was limited to an occasional orgy at the commissary at Astoria; I think I did go on the set once when Hecht and MacArthur were making a picture.

Against that, my experience in Hollywood has been almost exclusively on the inside. I have mingled severally with writers and directors and have been made a party to off-the-record complaints, charges and counter-charges. Writers, aggrieved by some slight from the New York critics, have taken it out on me personally and have even brought me their scripts to prove it was they and not the director who should have been credited with some bit of dialogue or scene; and I have heard directors snort with indignation for the reverse reason.

I am sure one could find instances where an electrician or a sound man or a wardrobe mistress or the star's valet has made a definite and enviable contribution to an effect, verbal or visual, for which someone else got the recognition. With my own eyes I have seen actors take a bit of business right out of the director's hands and direct it their own way. I know actors who write scenes into their pictures and re-write dialogue, whole reams of it. The trouble is that everyone wants to get into the writing act.

In order to write a minutely fair piece of criticism from the standpoint of this credit business a critic would have to sit in on story conferences and watch every step of the picture's evolution, including front-office huddles; and not even then without the aid of numerous and strategically-placed dictaphones could he be anywhere near sure he was on firm ground.

Experience and a long familiarity with the work of directors and writers will enable the critic to make a fair guess when it comes to singling out specific details or qualities and deciding who was responsible for them. The tricks and mannerisms of a director can become known to a critic and spotted by him even at a range of three thousand miles. It is no great shakes to spot a Lubitsch picture or a Hitchcock picture. But when Hitchcock is combined with Ben Hecht, let's say, or Lubitsch with Sam Hoffenstein, the critic if he is canny will stick to generalizations.

There are directors who are brilliant when they have brilliant scripts and pretty terrible when they haven't. It is easy to say that this could be true of any director, but that ain't necessarily so. The directors I have in mind have made lamentable pictures only when they originated their own stories and then got some hired help from the Screen Writers' Guild to fill in the structure. These directors simply are not writing men, no matter how convinced they be that they are; and yet they can do wonderful things with a prefabricated story and script.

There is no question that directors have ranked higher in prestige with the New York critics than have writers — or actors, for that matter. I think this influence has extended from silent films where directors were the real creators and writers nonentities. The cult of the director became firmly established with the advent of Russian, German and French pictures, and this attitude of the critics was later substantiated by Hollywood producers who quickly began importing foreign directors.

In those days the New York critics (I speak only of them because I haven't followed the others) did a great service to the cause of better pictures, and by their intellectualized enthusiasm raised the cinema to the dignity of a quasi-art, or art with a capital

Q. Richard Watts, Jr., and John S. Cohen, Jr., and, later on, Andy Sennwald, wrote stuff that made you seldom disappointed in the pictures they acclaimed.

It was good fun, too. Hollywood directors would go to New York (before their pictures opened) and sit around Bleek's and buy the boys drinks and discuss the art of the movies. So how can you wonder if the boys on seeing the pictures were reminded of scenes and touches which they had previously been told about and were thus able to remark on authoritatively? If there is anything a critic likes to exercise, it is authority based on inside information.

Why didn't writers go to New York and sit around Bleek's and discuss the scenes they had written? Well, for one thing I suspect it was because they had just left New York and didn't have the nerve to return with a pocketful of money and buy drinks for people who might now be just a little envious (and therefore contemptuous) of them.

If writers aim to wrest their proper recognition from the critics, let them become directors. If they can become producers as well, they are even better off. I don't think the Messrs. Brackett and Wilder have suffered a loss of writing prestige by virtue of their having taken over the other departments; and whatever the critics may say of *Spectre of the Rose*, I am pretty sure that Ben Hecht the producer and Ben Hecht the director will not have made them overlook Ben Hecht the writer.

Screen writers are in the screen writing business chiefly because there is more money in it than in any other kind of writing. For that reason and because of the satisfaction which goes with doing a good job, I should imagine that a writer would prefer critical huzzahs to a burial in Westminster Abbey.

Nevertheless, I don't think the motive means anything, or should mean anything, to a critic who is trying to write a piece of criticism. It seems to me therefore that this controversy is simply the case of an irresistible force (the screen writer's personal and pecuniary drive) meeting that immovable object in the aisle seat. As far as I can make out, that's where it begins and ends.

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BOOK REVIEW — "HOLLYWOOD REPORTER" STYLE

ROBERT HARARI

FOR WHOM THE BELLS TOLL (Mac Killop)

Publisher M. Mac Killop
Illustrator Maurice Sari
Printer Alfred Gimble
Bookbinder Anatole Pinkus
Paper Manufacturer . . .

John Newman

Paper Cutter Anonymous
Proofreader Aram Hagopian

Mac Killop does it again. With material that in less expert hands would have had trouble landing in the pulp field, Mac Killop brings out a book that will linger on top of the best-seller list for a long time to come.

FOR WHOM THE BELLS TOLL will cause much tolling of cash-register bells thanks to Mac Killop's trade mastery which overcomes a fundamentally poor

story, only occasionally brightened with good moments (Aram Hagopian was on the proofreading job).

Maurice Sari deserves a special accolade for his eloquent illustrations. Wherever the plot is ambiguous and obscure, Sari's pictures come to the rescue and make the point clear. Candidly, without Sari, this reviewer would have been lost.

Alfred Gimble — struggling gamely with the clumsy paragraphing and messy punctuation of the turbulent text — turns out his finest job of printing to date.

The anonymous paper cutter (not listing paper cutters seems to be a policy with Mac Killop) deserves tribute for a neat and tidy achievement that almost succeeds in covering up the sloppi-

ROBERT HARARI, a screen writer of seventeen years' experience on both sides of the Atlantic, spent the war years in the Psychological Warfare Branch in the Mediterranean and is now back at work in Hollywood.

ness of the dramatic construction.

And, of course, this review would be incomplete without a word of praise for Aram Hagopian, Mac Killop's ace proofreader. Nary a misspelled word or grammatical error escaped Hagopian's scrutiny — swamped though he must have been. However, on Page 327 (Hagopian must have been exhausted), we detected a boner: "ignorami"; obviously what was meant was "ignoramuses."

Anatole Pinkus produces a fine bit of deceptive bookbinding. Spellbound by his superb craftsmanship, you are trapped into buying the book. What happens next is no fault of Pinkus'.

But the performances of those mentioned would hardly have been possible without the contribution of John Newman, paper manufacturer. Particularly deserving of mention is his wise choice of snow-white paper which does much to relieve the somberness of the story.

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WHO WORKS FOR NOTHING?

MARTIN FIELD

CAN you imagine what would happen if a patron walked up to the box office of, say, Loew's 72nd Street Theatre and said, "I'm going in to see this picture. If I like it, then I'll pay you"? The manager would call him crazy and summon Mayor O'Dwyer's nearest bluecoat.

But that is exactly what many a producer and story editor does when he says, in effect, to a writer: "You go home, spend your time, energy, thought, paper, carbons, and wear and tear on your typewriter, as well as yourself, and turn out a screen original tailored to the talents of Tom Tuff. If we like it, then we'll pay you." But do we writers label the guy nuts and call Mayor Bowron's nearest minion of the law?

Alas, too many of us scurry right home and start to turn out our masterpieces purely on speculation, and the more tailor-made the script, the greater our waste of time should it be rejected. How many of us realize that we're the only one of 276 occupations in the industry that frequently turns out work on order for nothing? The actor doesn't act on speculation, the director doesn't direct on spec, the set designer doesn't design on spec, the costumer doesn't sew a single stitch on spec, and if you suggested working on spec to any studio worker, he'd have Herb Sorrell or the I.A.T.S.E. on your tail.

Get this scene: Louis B. Mayer says to Mervyn LeRoy: "You

MARTIN FIELD, playwright and novelist, has been working in Hollywood for the last year. He is currently completing a novel.

direct this picture — if I like the way you do it, I'll pay you." Or, for that matter, can you two-shot the smallest, most impecunious producer saying that to the smallest director in the business?

But it happens to writers all the time. To wit:

A writer was recently called in by a producer and a knotty story problem was thrown in his lap. The producer flattered the scribe by observing that he seemed to analyze the problem well. Was the writer put on payroll? No, the producer wanted to "see something on paper first." So, oiled with compliments, the writer rushed home to his typewriter and toiled a couple of weeks on a treatment. With perspiration still dripping, he presented the producer with a 70-page script. The producer, who by this time had made four trips to Santa Anita, played six gin-rummy sessions (two all night), flown one quick round-trip to New York, quarreled and made up with his wife, and in general undergone a mental change of regime, had no interest left in what had once been a hot story angle. Since there were no contractual obligations involved, the producer felt free to inform the writer, politely, that he thanked him for the treatment but it wasn't "just right." Naturally, not a red cent crossed palms.

In another case, an involuntarily independent producer was looking for a story which he could take to a major company and on its strength get production facilities and a release. (An illuminating illustration of the importance of the story, boys.) He found a screen original he liked but, it developed, the head of the company he planned to go to couldn't read more than a two-page story. The indie producer asked the writer to prepare a special two-page outline to fit the capacity of the company head. The writer, feeling he had already invested as much of his capital as possible, asked to be paid for this extra writing chore. The producer, not being used to writers asking money for work he wanted them to do, backed out.

There are additional cases that could be cited, almost ad infinitum. But unfortunately, too many of them add up to the writers not getting any money. What makes such a situation in the rarefied financial atmosphere of the motion picture industry so hard to take is the contrast with the writer's position in the maga-

zine field. With a financial rating far below that of the picture business, a writer who is asked to tailor an article to fit a magazine's needs is not expected to labor for free, as too many screen writers are when they're asked to tailor-write originals or treatments. If Reader's Digest, for instance, likes a writer's basic idea, he'll be paid for an outline of it whether the Digest decides to order a full article or not. For that matter, even many a movie fan-magazine will pay for any work done by a writer on order, whether it results in a published piece or not. Many radio programs, such as *Cavalcade of America*, pay for outlines and the work thereon, as a matter of course. The position of the writer in Hollywood is insecure so long as studios think they can have writers work on projects and then not feel obliged to pay them for effort expended.

My wife, for instance, as a magazine writer, is accustomed to receiving payment for any and all efforts. She just can't savvy such a typical Hollywood situation as the following:

The head of a major studio needs a story for one of the company's stars. He calls in the executive producer and says, "We need a story for Miss Felice Front." The executive producer calls in the producer of Miss Felice Front's pictures and says, "We need a story for Miss Felice Front." The producer calls in the story editor and relays the request. Finally, the story editor — the studio writers being busy on other assignments — calls in a writer and says, "We need a story for Miss Felice Front — desperately. Can you dream something up for her — special tailor-made? She's just sitting around eating her head off on payroll."

The head of the studio, the executive producer, the producer, the story editor and Miss Felice Front are all receiving adequate paychecks every Thursday. But the writer? He's expected to go home and work for the studio for nothing.

It reminds me of a crack made by Mrs. Mark Clark when her husband lost his pants while sneaking into North Africa to lay plans for the invasion. Told of the pants loss, she said, "Well, if I know the old Army game, right now there is a buck private somewhere who hasn't any pants." It's high time Hollywood writers stopped losing their pants.

For further enlightenment and contrast, let us see how the motion picture companies themselves operate when it comes to dealing with their stock in trade — the finished film in the can. The late Sidney Kent told students at Harvard in 1927: "The terms of payment in our business are strictly cash. We give absolutely no credit. Ninety-nine and a half per cent of our business is cash in advance. Our checker goes to the theatre. He gets his money before he leaves the house. I mean that, too."

So here we see how in many instances the studios are using the writer's capital — his time and money and effort — for free while, at the same time, they are demanding money from the exhibitors on the line. They win both ways.

Need I go on? I can already hear the howls of anguish from members of the Guild. But more than howls of anguish, we need to do something about it. We must set up some sort of system whereby studios recognize that they must pay for writers' capital. They must be made to observe the same simple rules that magazine publishers and other merchandisers of the writer's work observe. In short, this is one more sector of the long front of battle which must be taken before we can honestly speak of the dignity and high stature of the writer in Hollywood.

[EDITORIAL NOTE: The first writer cited by Mr. Field, who "put something on paper" concerning a producer's "knotty story problem," was violating Rule No. 7 of the SWG's Code of Working Rules. Writer No. 2, who refused to prepare a "two-page outline to fit the capacity of the company head," was acting properly. The writer who is willing to "dream up something for Miss Felice Front," is entitled to do so, on his own time, if he so wishes — provided he is not doing a treatment of a story idea which the studio already has, or actually developing a yarn which he has presented, orally or in writing, for studio consideration.

Rule No. 7 reads: "No member shall work on speculation or under any arrangement in which payment is contingent on approval or submit ideas in writing without compensation or written arrangements therefor. Members may, however, submit original stories and discuss their thoughts and reactions regarding material owned by the Producer."

This means, briefly, that if a producer or story editor suggests to a writer that the studio "might be interested in a story for such-and-such star" or with "such-and-such situation," the writer may legitimately write an original with that in mind and submit it. However, if the writer has beforehand told his story idea (or submitted it in brief synopsis, written or oral) to a studio, and the producer or story editor suggests that it "might be acceptable if developed in such-and-such

manner or for such-and-such players," the writer is working on speculation in violation of SWG rules if he tailors his story to the studio's needs.

Writers may DISCUSS with executives either their own original ideas or their ideas of how to treat a property owned by the studio. But such discussion properly constitutes a submission of material, and any executive who thereupon asks a writer to put the material on paper or further develop it, contingent on approval, is asking the writer to work on speculation, and the writer who complies is violating the rules of the Guild.

While the abuses cited by Mr. Field undoubtedly exist, the writers who go along with them in violation of SWG rules are themselves to blame. All SWG members should call to the attention of the Guild cases where producers request that they thus violate the Guild's Working Rules.]

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U. C. L. A. THEATRE ARTS DEPARTMENT

The University of California at Los Angeles has announced the creation, beginning with the Fall term, of a Department of Theatre Arts, to be headed by Kenneth Macgowan, contributor to *The Screen Writer*, one of the editors of *The Hollywood Quarterly*, and a member of the executive council of the Hollywood Writers' Mobilization.

In announcing the creation of this new department, Pres. Robert Gordon Sproul, of the University of California, stated: "The Los Angeles campus of California's state university is the logical place for a significant contribution to the development of these educationally, socially and economically important agencies of communication."

U. C. L. A. Provost Clarence A. Dykstra added: "Our new department of instruction and research in the mass agencies of communication will be of national significance and scope. The screen, radio, television and theatre are great instruments of education. Teaching and research in these fields are therefore a valid concern of the University. Close cooperation between the University and these mass communication industries so largely centered in Hollywood should enable us to make an important contribution to the theatre arts."

Kenneth Macgowan gave the following details on the new university department: "The decision of the University of California to establish a Department of Theatre Arts is a recognition of the intrinsic values inherent in these arts, and of the need of developing better understanding of them and mature standards for them. We will offer a broad, inclusive program of instruction and research in the three main divisions of the department — motion pictures, theatre and radio, with television to be added later. We are planning for a theatre, including a drama workshop and sound stages, as a part of the essential equipment." Macgowan went on to state that the Department would cooperate with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the major broadcasting networks — and it may be presumed that the major Hollywood Guilds will also be called upon for their cooperation.

Prior to this appointment, Macgowan had been a Hollywood producer for some fifteen years, taking time out in 1941-42 to be director of production of the Motion Picture Division of the Office of Inter-American Affairs. He is the author of such books as *The Theatre of Tomorrow*, *Continental Stagecraft*, *Masks and Demons*, and *Footlights Across America*.

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SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD, INC.

AFFILIATED WITH AUTHORS' LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.
1655 NO. CHEROKEE AVE., HOLLYWOOD 28, CALIFORNIA

E D I T O R I A L

THIS issue of The Screen Writer marks the beginning of its second year of publication. During the year just ended, the Editorial Committee, none of whose members had enjoyed any wide previous experience in practical magazine publication, encountered a good number of problems which it had not anticipated. Some of them were solved satisfactorily, and others still remain to be dealt with.

The Executive Board of the Guild established the magazine with two objectives in mind: First, that it should provide Guild members with a vehicle of expression; and Second, that it should enhance the prestige of screen writing and of screen writers by directing the attention of motion picture reviewers and public everywhere to our actual contribution to films.

The first objective — that of providing a vehicle of free expression — was a difficult one to define. Certain articles have been rejected precisely because of the ideas they expressed. In framing a policy for such rejections, the Editorial Committee has concluded that an article which assumes a basic anti-Guild position has no place in a Guild publication. Since the outside market for anti-Guild and anti-labor pieces is wide and extremely profitable,

it was felt that no invasion of the right of free expression was involved in such rejections.

The second objective — that of achieving recognition for screen writers and their craft — has, in the main, been achieved. Screen Writer articles have served as the basis for full columns in many metropolitan newspapers. The magazine has been widely quoted. It has achieved general commendation in the national press. We are still far from the final goal, but we have progressed.

Perhaps it would be appropriate here to explain how an article achieves publication in the magazine. All articles, upon submission, are typed in the Guild office, and copies are immediately mailed to all members of the Editorial Committee. Meetings are held once a month, in the course of which each article is carefully discussed. In the event changes or improvements are felt necessary, they are carefully thought out and tactfully suggested to the author. Rejection or acceptance of an article is determined by a majority vote. All editorials are approved first by the Editorial Committee, and then by the Executive Board, whose official policy they express. The articles express the individual ideas of their authors and, while limitations upon them have been noted above, they have no official implication whatever.

Naturally, the Committee is aware that a magazine at the end of its first year is subject to wide improvement. It is eager to receive suggestions which will lead to improvement. In order to effect it, however, the participation of the entire membership is necessary. Articles of the quality we require are not too easy to obtain, and diversification of content, as a result, is still a complex problem. In the coming year we intend to improve the magazine and broaden its scope. With the help of the membership, we shall be able to do so.

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S . W . G . B U L L E T I N

WAGE NEGOTIATIONS

On June 1, the Screen Writers' Guild addressed to the Producers' Conciliation Committee and to all major producers signatory to the basic writer-producer agreement a letter reopening the provisions of the contract on minimum wages, one of the sections of the contract which may properly be reopened at this time, although the agreement as a whole runs until 1949.

New minimum wages asked by SWG are: \$300 per week for all screen writers on a weekly basis; \$3,000 for flat deals covering all screen plays (thus automatically eliminating the differentiation which has heretofore existed between so-called action pictures and other feature-length motion pictures).

While recognizing the large jump requested over the previous minimums of \$125 per week and \$1,000 and \$1,500 for flat-deal screenplays, the Guild's Committee points out that the present minimums of \$345 per week for a 1st cameraman, \$231.12 for a re-recording sound mixer, \$262.50 for an art director (in his third year in the industry), \$188 for a free-lance assistant director, more than justify the figure demanded by the SWG. Moreover, all of the crafts mentioned above achieved tremendous advances in working conditions and salaries during the past four years, while writers' wages have remained frozen since the signing of the basic contract in 1942.

In accordance with the terms of the Minimum Basic Agreement, the Conciliation Committee of producers and writers will meet to consider these proposals within 30 days.

RATIONING

Following the lead of writers reported in our last issue, urging the adoption of voluntary rationing at the studio commissaries, the SWG Executive Board was petitioned by a group of members to take

the initiative in making Hollywood the spearhead of a national movement for voluntary rationing. As a result, the following resolution was sent by the SWG to all Hollywood guilds and unions:

SWG to Hollywood Organizations

'WHEREAS, the food situation throughout the world has reached a most desperate state and the starving peoples of the war-ravaged countries must depend for survival on the food supplies which can come to them largely from the United States; therefore, be it

"RESOLVED: That the Screen Writers' Guild, at the urging of groups of its members at different Hollywood studios, calls upon all Hollywood unions and guilds to join it in requesting that studio commissaries prepare on Tuesdays and Fridays special menus which will not include fats, cereals, wheat products or meats; and thereby,

"That the motion picture industry, through the initiative of the labor organizations within its ranks, take the lead and set the example for a nation-wide campaign of voluntary food rationing which can make available from our stockpiles and supplies the food products so urgently needed by the rest of the world."

VETERANS' ADMINISTRATION

The Veterans' Administration, 1041 S. Broadway, Los Angeles, has opened a new Motion Picture Services office, to furnish factual information and technical assistance to the motion picture industry on veterans and their activities. The office is headed by Douglas F. George, recently-released naval lieutenant, before the war in public relations with 20th Century-Fox. Services of the film office will be extended to producers of 16-mm. industrial and educational films as well as to major studios.

The office, in its first release, offers information to producers (and writers) on the following aspects of veterans' problems: Education, Hospitalization, Vocational Rehabilitation, Loans (on farm, business or home), Low-cost Insurance,

Occupational Guidance and Counsel, On-the-job (Apprenticeship) Training.

The VA points out that Housing and Employment are not under its jurisdiction, but are handled respectively by the Federal Housing Authority and the United States Employment Service.

THE CRAFT OF THE SCREEN WRITER

The article by Dalton Trumbo, under this title, originally announced for this issue of *The Screen Writer*, has been held up to allow the printing of Thornton Delehanty's contribution to the writer-critic controversy. It will appear in an early issue.

TAILOR-MADE PLAYS

In view of the fact that motion picture studios are now employing or propose to employ writers for the purpose of writing stage plays or other material which might be dramatized for play production, and in order to devise principles which might protect writers so employed as well as protecting the market for plays, a committee of the SWG has made to the Dramatists' Guild the following suggestions, for adoption in such manner as the Dramatists' Guild may determine in its new basic agreement:

SWG to Dramatists' Guild

1. As to plays written under employment: The actual writer or writers should

be accorded all rights granted to authors under the Dramatists' Guild basic agreement, except that one-third (1/3) of the salary or other compensation paid to the writer or writers by the employer shall be repaid to the employer out of the first royalties payable to the writer or writers for the play production in accordance with the terms of the Dramatists' Guild basic agreement.

2. As to other material written under employment and, at any time after the date hereof, offered for dramatization by a person who is not an employee, the writer or writers of the original material shall be accorded all rights, privileges and courtesies given by the Dramatists' Guild basic agreement to authors of original material which is offered for dramatization, including specifically the right to approve or disapprove of the person selected for dramatizing the material, provided however that one-third (1/3) of the compensation paid to the writer of the original material by his employer shall be treated as an advance by the employer against royalties payable to the writer of the original material, and such sums shall be repaid to the employer out of royalties for the play production. This contemplates a division of royalties between the writer of the original material and the dramatist; and provision should be made for requiring the mutual consent of the writer and dramatist to the division of royalties before the dramatization is undertaken.

SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD STUDIO CHAIRMEN

COLUMBIA — Melvin Levy; Ted Thomas, alternate.

M-G-M — Isobel Lennart; Sonya Levien, Marion Parsonnet, Osso Van Eyss, Polly James, William Ludwig, stewards; Robert Andrews, Paul Wellman, Arch Whitehouse, alternates.

PARAMOUNT — Abe Polonsky; Robert Lees, alternate.

R-K-O — Arthur Ross; Bess Taffel, alternate.

REPUBLIC — John Butler; Betty Burbridge, alternate.

20th CENTURY FOX — Howard Dimsdale; Wanda Tuchock, alternate.

UNIVERSAL — Joel Malone.

WARNER BROS. — Ranauld MacDougall.

NEWS NOTES

★ This month's programs of the N. Y. Museum of Modern Art's retrospective of Documentaries, 1922-45, include: June 17-20 (American Wartime Documentaries: Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs), The Bridge, El Agente Agronomo, The Grain That Built a Hemisphere, Water, Friend or Enemy; June 21-23 (Towards the Future), Naples is a Battlefield, Housing in Scotland, Children of the City; June 24-27 (Canadian Documentaries), Geopolitics: Hitler's Plan for Empire, When Asia Speaks, Inside France, Food — Secret of the Peace; June 28-30 (American Wartime Documentaries), The Story of Big Ben, With the Marines at Tarawa, The Battle for the Marianas, Guam; I Saw It Happen, Fury in the Pacific; July 1-7 (The Anglo-American Film), The True Glory; July 8-14 (Masterpieces of Documentary), Western Approaches, To the Shores of Iwo Jima.

★ American Contemporary Gallery is running a special 4-week documentary series. Already shown, Eisenstein's Thunder Over Mexico, Hackenschmied (Ham-mid)'s A Better Tomorrow, Jennings' Diary For Timothy, Powell's Edge of the World. Remaining bills are: Th.-Fri., June 20-21, Pare Lorentz' The Plow That Broke the Plains and Eisenstein's Ten Days That Shook the World; Th.-Fri., June 27-28, Paul Strand's Native Land and OWI's The Pale Horseman. Admission, \$1.00 per evening.

★ FOREIGN FILMS — The month's crop of imports shown in Hollywood include Konstantin Simonov's Days and Nights, the remarkable Italian underground film, The Open City, now at the Esquire, and the French Film Festival, including Carnival in Flanders, Escape to Yesterday, Pearls of the Crown, Harvest, The Baker's Wife, Amphitryon, Crime and Punishment, and Orage, at the Studio (consult the theatre for dates of showings) . . . The outstanding French railway-resistance film, La bataille du rail, is reported to be available locally for private showings.

★ Effective July 3, Academy Award Theatre will be heard on CBS Wednesdays at 6-6:30 P. M. (PST). Remaining programs till the switchover include: Sat., June 15 (3:00 P. M. PST), Pride of the Marines, with John Garfield; Sat., June 22, The Front Page, with Pat O'Brien and Adolph Menjou; Sat., June 29, A Star Is Born, with Fredric March.

★ Karl Schlichter, whose article The Irresponsibles (March) dealt with public health problems on the screen, has a new weekly radio show, Conquest, stories of man's conquest of disease, Saturday nights at 9:30 P. M. (PST) on KFI.

★ Pasadena Playhouse has Terence Rattigan's While the Sun Shines, on the boards June 12-23.

★ Actors' Laboratory Workshop Theatre is presenting eight performances of Harry Brown's A Sound of Hunting. Zoning restrictions limit the shows to Friday and Saturday nights; remaining performances are scheduled for June 14, 15, 21 & 22. Tickets, \$5.00 for two; proceeds to Lt. Richard Fiske Memorial Scholarship Fund. Next regular production of Actors' Laboratory will be Odets' Awake and Sing, with almost all of the original New York cast, opening June 25 for a 4-week run.

SWG members are urged to bring to the attention of The Screen Writer production of their plays, publication of their novels and stories, or other non-motion picture literary activities, for listing in these News Notes.

★ Duell, Sloan and Pearce have published an anthology of John O'Hara's stories and novels, titled Here's O'Hara, covering his literary output for a period of fourteen years.

★ Russel Crouse and Howard Lindsay, who won the Pulitzer Prize for their play, State of the Union, have announced that the prize money will be donated to the Authors' League Fund.

★ William Kozlenko's chapter on The Technique of the Screenplay, in the book *A Practical Guide to Writing* (Knickerbocker Press, New York), is being translated into French, Swedish and Spanish for film publications in those languages. Kozlenko, after his current film assignment, goes to New York to prepare for the opening of his play, *Even As You and I*, postponed from last season.

★ James M. Cain's drive for protection of authors' rights, begun in the last Screen Writer with his article, *The Opening Gun*, is receiving widespread attention, and was the subject of a lengthy article in The Los Angeles Times of June 2. This report also dealt at length with Cain's plan for an American Authors' Authority, which will be the subject of a forthcoming article in The Screen Writer. . . . Cain's novel, *Past All Dishonor*, is on the current best-seller lists.

★ Another SWG member with a novel doing well in the bookstores is Niven Busch, whose *Day of the Conquerors* has just been published.

★ Louis Verneuil's play *Obsession*, adapted by Jane Hinton, was produced for two performances at the Lobero Theatre in Santa Barbara.

★ SWG member John Joseph Davidson has published a book of poems, *Reflections and Moods*, with an introduction by Michael M. Zarchin. (Available at bookstores, or from the author: 553 2nd Ave., San Francisco, Calif.).

★ Sometime screen writer and SWG member Gene Fowler continues his autobiography with the publication of *Solo in Tom-Toms*, which came out this month.

★ Emmet Lavery's *The Magnificent Yankee* has been selected as one of several American plays to be produced with professional German troupes in Berlin and Vienna, under direction of the State Dept., as part of the U. S. Army's reeducation program in the occupied territories, Ernst Lothar will be in charge. . . . Lavery has also been informed that his play will be

included in Burns Mantle's collection of this year's Best.

★ SWG members included in *Esquire's* 2nd Sports Reader (A. S. Barnes) include Charles Grayson, Lewis Herman, Horace McCoy, Irwin Shaw and Morton Thompson.

★ Arnaud D'Usseau and James Gow, authors of the successful play *Deep Are The Roots*, have put out an appeal in the name of the Civil Rights Congress (205 East 42nd St., New York 17), for funds to help save the life of Willie McGee, Mississippi Negro, condemned to death for rape on the flimsiest of evidence. "Willie McGee," they write, "must be saved from legal lynching. The Rankins and Bilbos must be cheated of their prey."

Additional copies of the Index, Vol. 1, The Screen Writer, are available to individuals or organizations at no cost. Address requests to The Screen Writer, 1655 No. Cherokee Ave., Hollywood 28, Calif.

★ "The trouble is that everyone wants to get into the writing act," says Thornton Delehanty (p. 32). More and more of our acting brethren are turning into writers, it appears. Errol Flynn, a couple of months ago, published a novel called *The Showdown*, which proved that he has everything to gain by remaining an actor. Jean-Pierre Aumont is the author of a book just published in French, consisting of his wartime diary as a member of the Free French Army. Elizabeth Taylor, 13-year-old actress, has published *Nibbles and Me* (Duell, Sloan & Pearce), the story of her pet chipmunk. George Sanders, with several novels to his credit, is reported to have written a screen original. And Alexander Knox, now a member of SWG, turns out, in addition to being one of our most distinguished actors, to be the author of several mystery novels under a nom-de-plume which he prefers to keep secret. Of course, there were Jim Tully and Bob Benchley, among others, who turned the tables in the past.

★ **FOREIGN VISITORS** — Distinguished foreign visitors to the Los Angeles area during the past month have included Konstantin Simonov, whose film *Days and Nights* was shown at a special town-meeting showing sponsored by the Hollywood Writers' Mobilization, with Alvah Bessie, Lena Horne, John Cromwell, Franklin Fearing, Frances Millington and John B. Hughes among those participating; Prof. George Georgalas and Nicos Carvounis, well-known Greek writer and journalist, who addressed several meetings to present the viewpoint of the EAM in their native land; Joe Van Cottom, editor of the Belgian magazine *Ciné-Revue* and secretary of the Association of the Belgian Motion Picture Press, visiting the studios and presenting awards to various stars on behalf of his government; and Lazar Wechsler, Richard Schweizer and Leopold Lindtberg, respectively producer, writer and director of *The Last Chance* and *Marie-Louise* (for the latter of which Schweizer received the Academy Award for the Best Original Screenplay of 1945).

★ Bosley Crowther, film critic of *The New York Times*, was also a visitor out here during the month. In addition to looking over the current production set-ups in the studios, he met with the editors of *The Screen Writer*, to discuss the various articles on writers and critics which grew out of the original exchange of correspondence between us. Crowther stated that he felt, as we do, that these articles in particular, and the publication of the magazine in general, have done much to clear the air and prepare the way for a better relationship between film creators and film reviewers.

★ California primary election results, reflecting a conservative victory generally, brought Democratic nominations to the following Hollywood Guildsmen: Will Rogers, Jr., U. S. Senate; Helen Gahagan Douglas, Congress, 14th District; Frank Scully, Assembly, 57th Dist., and Gordon Williams (editor of the *Hollywood Press-Times*), Assembly, 59th Dist. Defeated were SWG President Emmet Lavery, running for Congress, and Lucile Webster Gleason, running for Secretary of State.

★ One class remains in the People's Educational Center's course on Jazz, given by Ross Russell. Tues. night, June 25, 8:30 P. M., at the Screen Cartoonists' Guild hall (Admission, \$1.00), the lecture will discuss the music of today, the modernists and the bee-bop school. New term at PEC starts July 8.

★ **FRANCE** — *L'Ecran Français*, weekly movie magazine, carries a note from Vladimir Pozner, Paris correspondent for *The Screen Writer* and *The Hollywood Quarterly*, asking its readers to write him about their reactions to the American films they have seen since the Liberation. Results of this correspondence and of Pozner's personal observations in France will be published in the French magazine concurrently with their appearance in these pages . . . A letter from Paris informs us, by way of illustrating the rebirth of interest in motion pictures over there, that while seven weekly movie magazines have put in their appearance in the year and a half since the Liberation, no less than 130 other requests for authorization to publish magazines of this type are said to have been received by the Ministry of Information.

★ **CZECHOSLOVAKIA** — Negotiations are going on for the exclusive reprinting of *Screen Writer* articles in *Kino*, the official motion picture magazine of Czechoslovakia.

★ Paul Small Artists, Ltd., 201 W. 52nd St., New York 19, announce that they have established a Play Department and "are interested in securing new plays, radio scripts and screen treatments which we in turn will submit to various producers for a Broadway production." Refer correspondence and scripts to Dan Leeds at the above address.

★ Associated Magazine Contributors, Inc. (68 W. 45th St., New York 19), which will soon publish a pocket-size magazine owned entirely by its contributors, announces that it has sold out its first issue of stock, amounting to \$100,000, and will shortly issue \$160,000

more. Jerome Ellison, former Managing Editor of *Colliers*, is editor of the new cooperative venture.

★ Lawrence R. Maxwell (45 Christopher St., New York 14) has put out a List Number One: Books About the Movies, cataloguing a remarkable number of rare and interesting film items.

RESTRICTIVE MEASURES

SWG members are requested to let The Screen Writer know the details of deletions from their current (or recent) scripts demanded by the Johnston Office. It is felt that a compilation of such incidents of restrictions upon free creation — whether from a moral, social or political standpoint — may furnish the basis for an article in a future issue of the magazine, analyzing the extent to which the Production Code serves a useful purpose. Such incidents might also tend to reveal whether or not — and if so, in what degree — the Producers' Association through the Production Code imposes stereotypes, discourages discussion of vital problems, or otherwise affects film output, over and above the routine limitations of morals and taste laid down in the Code.

Please address such communications to: The Editor, The Screen Writer, 1655 No. Cherokee, Hollywood 28, California. Where possible, we will appreciate receiving specific quotes of the text involved as well as the text (if available) of the MPAA office's letter giving its reasons for the required deletions.

★ Written mainly for the use of publishers and editors, a book that should also prove of interest to many writers as well as producers (and their attorneys), is Charles Angoff's *The Book of Libel*, a study of libel and the relevant laws in each of the states and the District of Columbia, with an analysis of sixteen

cases that have come before the courts. The tome is published by Essential Books. When not studying libel, Angoff is Managing Editor of *The American Mercury*.

★ Citizens' Committee for Better Education (5855 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles 28; officers: Mrs. George Mangold, Mrs. Samuel Moore, Mrs. John Whedon, Mrs. Philip Stevenson and Mrs. David Commons) submits a nine-page Outline of Moral Rearmament, with subheads on the movement's history, name, religious beliefs and practices, attitudes toward organized religion, fascism, the war, "big names," labor, economic theory, and the backing it received. This pamphlet (available at the above address) should prove invaluable to any writer needing a proper evaluation of MRA for work he may be doing in that connection.

★ The Authors' League Bulletin for April predicts that the current book boom will continue, with consumer interest high in house-building and home-making books, enormous demand for textbooks from swollen colleges, and publishers' lists showing a plethora of now-it-can-be-told war books, anthologies, biographies, and interpretations of Russia and China, and less art, cartoon and religious books.

★ Recommended reading: Emmet Lavery's *A Time For Action* (The Screen Writer, May), Harold J. Salemsen's *A Question of Morals* (The Screen Writer, April) — so say, respectively, The Bulletin of the Screen Composers' Association and The Hollywood Citizen-News.

★ Noted with interest: Bosley Crowther's excellent column on *The Writer's Rights* (New York Times, May 19), Archer Winsten's *Prison Without Bars*, or *Writers in Hollywood* (New York Post, May 20), Tom Donnelly's *Have The Movies Been Warping Your Mind?* (Washington Daily News, Apr. 27), Phil Scheuer's article on James M. Cain (Los Angeles Times), A. U.'s hysterical attack on Wolfe Kaufman's *What's The Answer?* (Daily Variety), Variety (N. Y.)'s excel-

lent reporting of the licensing plan and other SWG initiatives (together with the same weekly's publication of an article by Jake Wilk, Eastern Story Editor for Warner Bros., constituting the first producer reply to SWG's licensing proposals). All of these will be analyzed in forthcoming issues of *The Screen Writer*.

★ Charles Palmer's *How To Sing For Money*, written in collaboration with Charles Henderson, has just been released by its third publisher, Nelson-Hall, Chicago, having previously been brought out by George Palmer Putnam in 1939 and Harcourt, Brace in 1941. Palmer has also contracted to do a textbook, titled *Twenty Modern Americans*, for publication by Harcourt next year.

★ Announced for publication in the Fall, by James Franklin Ferguson (1950 Curtis St., Denver 2, Colorado), is a new magazine, digest-size, to appear quarterly, and titled *Human Nature*. The editor is looking for "popular articles on the psychology of self-knowledge and the understanding of others," and related subjects. Payment promised: 1c to 5c per word, promptly on acceptance.

★ Special Library Supplement No. 2, of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences' *Selected Bibliography of Current Motion Picture Literature*, prepared by Jay Leyda, has just appeared, covering the period of Sept.-Dec. 1945 (and including omissions which had occurred in the previous issue). Articles from *The Screen Writer*, we are happy to report, figure prominently in this exhaustive list of serious studies in print of the various aspects of motion pictures.

★ We are indebted to the Motion Picture Letter, issued by the Public Information Committee of the Motion Picture Industry, for the following statement from John W. Studebaker, U. S. Commissioner of Education: "One of the most significant educational outcomes of the experience of the Nation in connection with

various types of training programs during the war years has been the clearer realization of the important contribution which audio-visual aids can make to vitalizing instruction and facilitating the learning process. This realization should lead to a marked increase in the use of such aids in classroom instruction." The *Screen Writer* welcomes such comments, and has stressed this aspect of motion picture development in the past and will continue to do so in the future. (See, in past issues of the magazine, such articles as Courtney Anderson's *Writing For Commerce*, Harris Gable's *The Film Foundling*, and Ben Rinaldo's *A Writer Is Born—Caesarian Style*; and in our next issue James Roosevelt's story of the Marine Corps Training Film Program and Budd Schulberg's account of how the war criminals were indicted on their film records.)

★ The Authors' League Bulletin for May notes that The Publications Board, Library of Congress, is now making available to writers de-classified once-secret war material. Writers needing such documents in their work should apply to the Publications Board. . . The same issue of the Bulletin lists the nineteen possible markets for a literary property (*Motion Pictures* being No. 9, between *Anthology* and *Radio*), and promises in subsequent issues to analyze for its member-readers the details of each of them.

★ Commenting upon Alexander Hammid's article, *New Fields—New Techniques*, in our last issue, O. H. Coelln, editor of *Business Screen*, writes us: "Because we earnestly believe that the standards of the specializing industrial and educational film producers should be raised, we are recommending to company executives in this field that certain individuals like Alexander Hammid and others of his ability should be contacted for possible assignments. This field is growing and we would like to increase its healthy growth by bringing such talented, creative workers into its active production scene." Another reader, himself a director of documentaries, says of the same article: "It is extremely interesting. To my re-

gret, I think I detect in it a sort of re-
turn to the Art-for-art's-sake school,
under the guise of experimenting with the
potentialities of the cinema . . . But the

publication of such an article is very wel-
come, for it helps raise the level of The
Screen Writer above that of simply a
trade-union bulletin."

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the
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WRITER**

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A LISTING OF SCREEN WRITERS' CREDITS
EARNED ON FEATURE PRODUCTIONS
OF CURRENT AND RECENT RELEASE

CREDITS

APRIL 12, 1946 TO MAY 10, 1946

A

DORIS ANDERSON

Sole Screenplay THAT BRENNAN GIRL, REP

B

DWIGHT V. BABCOCK

*Contributor to Dialogue THE MAN WHO DARED, COL

VICKI BAUM

Sole Original Story HONEYMOON, RKO

EDWARD BOCK

Sole Screenplay THE MAN WHO DARED, COL

ALLEN BORETZ

Joint Screenplay (with Melville Shavelson) WHERE THERE'S LIFE, PAR

WILLIAM BOWERS

Joint Original Story (with Robinson Holbert) LADIES MAN, PAR

MALCOLM STUART BOYLAN

Additional Dialogue (with Dwight V. Babcock) THE MAN WHO DARED, COL

GEORGE BRICKER

Joint Screenplay (with Snag Werris, Robert Ellis and Helen Logan) THAT'S FOR ME, FOX

ROBERT STEPHEN BRODE

Sole Screenplay SING WHILE YOU DANCE, FOX

GEORGE BRUCE

Sole Screenplay LITTLE MISTER JIM, MGM

BETTY BURBRIDGE

Sole Original Screen Story THE HAUNTED MINE, MONO (Great Western)
Sole Screenplay OUT CALIFORNIA WAY, REP

*Academy Bulletin only

NIVEN BUSCH

Novel Basis DUEL IN THE SUN, UA (Vanguard)

JOHN K. BUTLER

Sole Original Story and Screenplay G. I. WAR BRIDES, REP

C

GEORGE CALLAHAN

Sole Original Screenplay THE SHADOW RETURNS, MONO
Sole Original Screenplay THE RED DRAGON, MONO
Sole Original Screenplay DARK ALIBI, MONO
Sole Screenplay BEHIND THE MASK, MONO

J. BENTON CHENEY

Sole Original Screenplay THROW A SADDLE ON A STAR, COL
Sole Screenplay THAT TEXAS JAMBOREE, COL

MYLES CONNOLLY

Joint Screenplay (with Jean Holloway) TILL THE CLOUDS ROLL BY, MGM

E

LORRAINE EDWARDS

Sole Original Story SING WHILE YOU DANCE, FOX

CYRIL ENDFIELD

Joint Screenplay (with Albert De Pina) JOE PALOOKA, CHAMP, MONO

F

BERNARD FEINS

Sole Original Story CUBAN PETE, UNI

COL — Columbia Pictures Corporation; FOX — Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation; MGM — Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios; MONO — Monogram Pictures Corporation; PAR — Paramount Pictures, Inc.; PRC — Producers Releasing Corporation of America; REP — Republic Productions, Inc.; RKO — RKO Radio Studios, Inc.; UA — United Artists Corporation; UNI — Universal Pictures Company, Inc.; UWP — United World Pictures; WB — Warner Brothers Studios.

FRED FREIBERGER

Additional Dialogue MISS TELEVISION, UA
(Comet)

G**PAUL GANGELIN**

Sole Original Story THAT TEXAS JAMBO-
REE, COL

Joint Screenplay (with Mauri Grashin)
SHINE ON TEXAS MOON, REP

ALEX GOTTLIEB

Joint Original Story Basis (with Maxwell
Shane) THE MAN WHO DARED, COL

MAURI GRASHIN

Joint Screenplay (with Paul Gangelin)
SHINE ON TEXAS MOON, REP

CLARENCE GREENE

Joint Original Screenplay (with Russell
Rouse) THE TOWN WENT WILD, PRC

H**LILLIE HAYWARD**

*Contributor to Screenplay Construction
JOHNNY COMES FLYING HOME, FOX

LEWIS HELMAR HERMAN

Joint Screenplay (with William B. Sack-
heim) HIS FACE WAS THEIR FORTUNE,
COL

ARTHUR HOERL

Sole Original Story BEHIND THE MASK,
MONO

MICHAEL HOGAN

Sole Adaptation DESIRABLE WOMAN, RKO

JEAN HOLLOWAY

Joint Screenplay (with Myes Connolly)
TILL THE CLOUDS ROLL BY, MGM

ANDREW HOLT

Sole Original Screenplay AVALANCHE, PRC

J**FREDERICK JACKSON**

Additional Dialogue BACHELOR'S DAUGH-
TERS, UA (Andrew Stone)

J. GRIFFIN JAY

Sole Screenplay DEVIL BAT'S DAUGHTER,
PRC

K**MICHAEL KANIN**

Sole Screenplay HONEYMOON, RKO

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ROBERT E. KENT

Joint Screenplay (with Dane Lussier) DICK
TRACY VS. CUEBALL, RKO

L**ANDE LAMB**

Joint Screenplay (with George Plympton)
HOP HARRIGAN, COL

DAVID LANG

Sole Original Screenplay QUEEN OF BUR-
LESQUE, PRC

ALAN LEMAY

Joint Screenplay (with Thames Williamson)
CHEYENNE, WB

HELEN LOGAN

Joint Screenplay (with Snag Werris, Robert
Ellis and George Bricker) THAT'S FOR ME,
FOX

STEPHEN LONGSTREET

Sole Screenplay and Novel Basis STALLION
ROAD, WB

DANE LUSSIER

Joint Screenplay (with Robert E. Kent)
DICK TRACY VS. CUEBALL, RKO

M**PHILIP MACDONALD**

*Contributor to Screenplay THE SENTENCE,
WB

GEORGE MILTON

Sole Original Screenplay TERRORS ON
HORSEBACK, PRC

JOSEF MISCHEL

Sole Original Screenplay CLAUDE'S WIFE,
UNI

FRED MYTON

Sole Original Screenplay GENTLEMEN WITH
GUNS, PRC

N**ROBERT NATHAN**

Novel Basis WAKE UP AND DREAM, FOX

SAM NEUMAN

Sole Screenplay MISSOURI HAY-
RIDE, PRC

KURT NEUMANN

Joint Original Story (with Reginald Le
Borg) MISS TELEVISION, UA (Comet)

O**CHARLES O'NEAL**

Sole Screenplay THE DEVIL'S MASK, COL

P

CHARLES PALMER

Joint Story MAKE MINE MUSIC, RKO
(Disney)

GEORGE PLYMPTON

Joint Screenplay (with Ande Lamb) HOP
HARRIGAN, COL (Esskay)
Sole Original Screenplay GANGSTERS DEN,
PRC (Neufeld)

ROBERT PRESNELL, SR.

Joint Screenplay (with M. Coates Webster)
CUBAN PETE, UNI

R

JEAN RENOIR

Sole Screenplay THE SOUTHERNER, UA
Sole Screenplay DESIRABLE WOMAN, RKO

RUSSELL ROUSE

Joint Original Screenplay (with Clarence
Greene) THE TOWN WENT WILD, PRC

LOUISE ROUSSEAU

Sole Original Screenplay WEST OF THE
ALAMO, MONO

ROBERT RUSSELL

Sole Original Story and Joint Screenplay
(with Claude Binyon) THE WELL-GROOMED
BRIDE, PAR

TIM RYAN

Joint Original Screenplay (with Edmond
Seward) GHOST BUSTERS, MONO (Jan
Grippe)

S

JERRY SACKHEIM

Joint Screenplay (with Sherman L. Lowe)
THE UNDERCOVER WOMAN, REP

WILLIAM B. SACKHEIM

Joint Screenplay (with Lewis Helmar Her-
man) HIS FACE WAS THEIR FORTUNE, COL

ARTHUR ST. CLAIR

Additional Dialogue QUEEN OF BURLESQUE,
PRC

ADELA ROGERS ST. JOHN

Sole Original Story THAT BRENNAN GIRL,
REP

GEORGE WALLACE SAYRE

Sole Original Screenplay SECRETS OF A
SORORITY GIRL, PRC

RAYMOND SCHROCK

Sole Screenplay LARCENY IN HER HEART,
PRC

MAXWELL SHANE

Joint Original Story (with Alex Gottlieb)
THE MAN WHO DARED, COL

MELVILLE SHAVELSON

Sole Original Story and Joint Screenplay
(with Allen Boretz) WHERE THERE'S LIFE,
PAR

BARRY SHIPMAN

Sole Original Story OUT CALIFORNIA WAY,
REP

EARLE SNELL

Sole Original Screenplay STAGECOACH TO
DENVER, REP

T

FRANK TASHLIN

Joint Original Story Basis (with Irving Phil-
lips and Edward Verdier)
DELIGHTFULLY DANGEROUS, UA (Charles
R. Rogers)

ERIC TAYLOR

Sole Original Story and Screenplay THE
MYSTERIOUS INTRUDER, COL

JOHN TWIST

Sole Screenplay and Joint Original Story
(with George Worthing Yates) SINBAD THE
SAILOR, RKO

U

ELWOOD ULLMAN

Sole Screenplay MISS TELEVISION, UA
(Comet)

V

ANTHONY VEILLER

Sole Screenplay THE KILLERS, UNI

W

LUCI WARD

Sole Original Story DICK TRACY VS. CUE-
BALL, RKO

M. COATES WEBSTER

Joint Screenplay (with Robert Presnell, Sr.)
CUBAN PETE, UNI

PAUL I. WELLMAN

Sole Original Story CHEYENNE, WB

GEORGE WELLS

Adaptation TILL THE CLOUDS ROLL BY,
MGM

SNAG WERRIS

Joint Screenplay (with Robert Ellis, Helen
Logan and George Bricker) THAT'S FOR ME,
FOX

THAMES WILLIAMSON

Joint Screenplay (with Alan LeMay)
CHEYENNE, WB

Y

GEORGE WORTHING YATES

Joint Original Story (with John Twist)
SINBAD THE SAILOR, RKO

PHILIP YORDAN

Sole Screenplay WHISTLE STOP, UA (Nero)

ROBERT M. YOST

Sole Original Screenplay RIO GRANDE
RAIDERS, REP

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And further articles by LEWIS AMSTER, JAMES M. CAIN, PHILIP DUNNE, SHERIDAN GIBNEY, LEWIS HERMAN, ARTHUR KOBER, EMMET LAVERY, M. WM. POMERANCE, ROBERT ROSSEN, ARTHUR STRAWN, LOUIS ADAMIC, F. HUGH HERBERT, H. S. KRAFT, WM. H. MOORING, WM. E. OLIVER, and others.

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JULY, 1946

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AUTHORITY**

JAMES M. CAIN

**OPEN LETTER TO OUR FRIENDS, THE
AMERICAN SCREEN WRITERS**

HENRI JEANSON

FROM "DO IT NOW" TO "WELL DONE"

JAMES ROOSEVELT

THE DOCUMENTARY FILM ERA

NOEL MEADOW

A GUILDS FILM LIBRARY

CHARLES A. PAGE

With A Letter from JEAN HERSHOLT

S. W. G. BULLETIN

CORRESPONDENCE

NEWS NOTES

SCREEN CREDITS

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the SCREEN WRITER

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JULY 1946

AN AMERICAN AUTHORS' AUTHORITY

JAMES M. CAIN

[Mr. Cain's article has been submitted to the Executive Board of the Screen Writers' Guild as a plan of action for the Guild and for the Authors' League of America as a whole. The members of the Board unanimously approved his proposals in principle and feel that they should be required reading for every writer in the country. The plan is here printed for the first time in order that the members of the Guild may join with the Board in a detailed study of it and help, with their suggestions, to make it the collective program of the organized writers of America.]

IT WOULD be difficult to exaggerate the plight of the American writer, or of any writer whose works are sold in the United States, today. If he is a dramatist, he has, it is true, at least the appearance of a favorable status. The conditions of his work compel him to live in New York, or

JAMES M. CAIN is the distinguished novelist and screen writer. His most recent book is *Past All Dishonor*.

spend considerable time there, so that he meets others of his trade, and with them takes steps for his own protection; he can coordinate with the theatrical unions, also most active in New York; for many years, as a matter of fact, he has done this, so that the Dramatists' Guild is probably the strongest, and has operated in the most satisfactory way, of all the four guilds comprising the Authors' League. But what has brought him trade victories often brings him aesthetic disaster.

Part of his organizational success is due to the fact that he doesn't deal with the big, formidable corporations that other writers face, but with individual producers, most of them temperamentally peculiar, so that collectively they are weak and relatively easy to handle. But this very whacky, fly-by-night, here-today-gone-tomorrow quality that makes them poor adversaries also makes them poor entrepreneurs. They rarely have money, and if they do, are reluctant to put it into plays; the whole Broadway stage is a jumble of producers who might better have been fight managers, angels, and angels' blondes, with the playwright, as often as not, expected to jell this mess into a rehearsal date, and then turn around and direct the show. The writer for the stage is favorably situated only if he has a hit on his hands and it is a question of what share of that hit he can now manage to keep. But if he has only a script on his hands, and it is a question of his chances for a production that will exploit it successfully, all that can be said is it is a matter of luck.

If he writes for magazines, he hasn't even the appearance of a favorable status. He is faced with all sorts of insulting rules, arbitrarily imposed on him by editors; he may offer his work to only one magazine at a time, else have all copies of it returned to him unread. For this the pretense is made that consideration of the work takes time, and must not be hurried by nervousness over a rival's interest. The purpose actually is to deprive him of a competitive market, and eliminate the one factor that might operate toward reasonable promptness. He is compelled to yield to the magazine a senseless catalogue of rights, of no use to it, but of considerable value to himself, on the pretext that it must "protect itself" until after publication, when they will be returned to him, a promise usually broken.

If he writes books, his situation is even worse. Here again, the publishers demand rights there is no reason they should have: abridge-

ment rights, reprint rights, foreign rights, and serial rights, to name only those which are claimed by practically all publishers, and there are not three who will not accept, if they can get away with it, the picture rights, and a share of the picture money. From those of his rights which they control, they take 50% of the revenue, although they give him no service except that customarily given by an agent, and often bungle the exploitation with an incompetence few agents would be guilty of. His royalties they retain for six, eight or twelve months after they are earned, regarding them not as money held in trust, but as funds subject to all ordinary commercial risks, so that if they fail in business he is merely one more creditor. In that case, not only does he not get his money, but he sees his rights disappear in the wreckage too, so that many a book, like Miss Frances Marion's excellent *How to Write and Sell Film Stories*, simply goes into a deep freeze that has no end under present laws.

Here, too, he faces a conspiracy against him similar in all important respects to the conspiracy of the magazine editors. Up to a certain point, the corporate interests with which he deals blackjack each other, play tricks on each other, strive in various ways to out-do each other, but when the line of the vested interest is reached, they stick together with a touching unanimity. The publishers assert that they too must "protect themselves" in a madly spinning world, and that they are entitled to 50% of the reprint, foreign, abridgement, picture and sometimes the serial rights, because exploitation of these rights cuts in on their regular sales. Not one word of this is true. Appearance of a book in *Reader's Digest* does not hurt their sales, but stimulates them, which is also the case with reprint, foreign, and serial publication, while the increase that results from the appearance of a picture based on it is prodigious.

And when it comes to Book Clubs, of whose revenue they also take half, the claim that these cut in on their sales becomes simply grotesque, for their beneficent effect on business is legendary. Did any club ever pick a book because of something contributed by the publisher? Regarded simply as an investment, has a publisher yet contributed as much in cash to manufacture, promote, and distribute a book as the author contributes in maintaining himself while writing it? The Book Clubs encouraged this split because at first they encountered opposition from the publishers, and they dissolved that opposition by a bribe. But it was a bribe at the

expense of the writer, who was all hot for clubs, for the occasional jackpot they would give him, and willing to close his eyes to the blue chip that went to the house. All claims made by publishers for half of these by-products, as they are often called, are phoney. They get away with the gyp simply because on this issue they encircle the writer with a completely unified front. There is no place he can turn to get his book published without giving up these rights which should belong to him.

If he writes for radio, his situation is still worse. Here, he is expected to assist large ventures in promotion, giving his best thought to what will help his sponsor, his agency, and his network. But not one of these rewards him with the least recognition of his effort, or with any right, share, or interest in the material he produces. It is in this field that the "unexploited right" is such a crying evil, where great corporations own rights and "just sit on them," as the saying goes. And often deals that could be of great profit to writers, especially when picture companies would be quite willing to pay for the use of celebrated programs, are made on a gratis basis simply because it never occurred to anybody concerned with them that the writer was entitled to anything.

But if he deals with picture companies, he is probably the worst off of all. Here, by established custom, he is compelled to part with his property forever, often for sums so small they are grotesque in comparison with the amount made out of it by the company that buys it, and then to stand by and see it remade time after time, without participation of any kind in the perpetual bonanza that he has created. Also by established custom, he often finds such potential profitable rights as he has managed to keep spoiled by the practices of the picture companies, as for example the radio rights, which he could exploit when the book is "hot," but which are usually kept for two years as part of the picture deal, and in that time cool off until they are of no value.

And if he works for the studios, as well as sells them material, what he faces is fantastic. He owns not one dot or comma of what he writes; he must even certify, in some instances, that the studios are the "authors" of his work, and it has even happened that these gifted sons of the State of Delaware have taken picture scripts so written and attempted to produce them as stage plays. In most instances he must

sign a contract, if he is to get a contract at all, which binds him for five years, but binds the company for only six months. And for this dubious security he must give an option in perpetuity on any original work he produces during the life of his contract, as a result of the "check-back" clause which all these contracts carry. He may, he is told, elect a "lay-off" period, during which he may write works of his own. Naturally his employers, being very proud of him, and feeling a great interest in everything he does, want "first call" on his work. But if, when he has written it, they do not accept it at his price, and he then gets an offer somewhere else, unless the new offer is greater than the amount he asked of them, he is compelled to give them forty-eight hours to meet the new bid, and if they do meet it, to sell to them. It is argued that this means nothing, since "they all do it," and thus know, when dealing with any contract writer, that they have his home studio to bear in mind. If it means nothing, why do they all do it? And why do they cling to it with a tenacity that has to be seen to be believed? It means they can check their bets until the last call has been made, and then call or stay out as they like. It means the writer must quote a price before he has any idea what strength his book will develop when offered to the public, or what his play will do on the stage, while they needn't bid until the market has fully disclosed itself. And on top of all this, there is the sorry matter of credit.

In other fields, his name is supposed to mean something, but in pictures, even though it be his story that is being told and his script that is telling it, his credit will be inconspicuous, with no allusion to him in the publicity and almost none in advertising. Hard fighting has brought some improvement in this situation, but not much. In no branch of the business can you have a picture until you have a script, and yet, in a business that manufactures glory as a baker manufactures bread, there is none so poor as will weave a writer's chaplet, or even put a dandelion in his buttonhole.



Yet in spite of the foregoing, his worst persecutor is not the magazines, the publishers, the radio, or the picture companies. This honor

is reserved for the United States Government. Other fields of endeavor, represented at Washington by formidable lobbies, receive reasonably fair treatment there, and some of them special coddling. The farmer is treated with gentle deference, as is the organized laborer, the manufacturer, the exporter, the flyer. But the writer, represented by nobody, gets no discernible breaks. And recently, in the Clifford Goldsmith case, the United States courts abolished his claim to any ponderable interest in his property, and left him the one man in the country not permitted to keep anything except a bare fraction of what he gets for it, although God knows it takes him just as much work to produce it as it takes anyone else, and at least as much talent.

The case was the one in which the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit upheld the Treasury Department in its decision to discontinue its original practice of treating picture rights as a capital asset, and taxing the proceeds as such. Instead, it proceeded to tax them as straight income, at a much higher rate. Judge Chase, speaking for the court, held that there had been no sale, of a capital asset or otherwise, when Goldsmith sold the rights to his play, for a copyright was not "separable." It was one piece, this judge held, and the most that could be said for the transaction was that it was a license, as such taxable as income just as royalties would be. Judge Learned Hand concurred with Judge Chase, but for different reasons, and wrote an opinion with which Judge Swan concurred. Picture rights, he said, could "for most purposes" be called "property," and their disposal a "sale." However, it is "stock in trade," or "whatever else is normally included in an inventory." Thus picture rights are "in the ordinary course of business" to a writer, and as such taxable as "ordinary income."

It is hard to take these opinions seriously as law, and one can only conclude that the court was determined to uphold the Treasury in squeezing taxes out of the writer, and willing to use quibbles or whatever was necessary to reach the intended result. It will be most difficult to convince a writer that his works are merely "stock in trade," as Judges Hand and Swan so affably put it, just so many kegs of nails to be rolled over the counter and rung up on the cash register. What he creates is not "stock in trade" but property, and he knows that he has just so many of these ova in his belly, and indeed he is

never sure that the latest one he produced will not be his last; it is a special, peculiar, and heart-breaking business, wherein one work, done at great labor, time, and expense, may bring almost no return, while another, done with comparative ease, may be a gold mine, and may, more importantly, be the only gold mine this writer ever sees. And any big picture sale, even with top writers, is so unusual that it may be repeated only once or twice during their lives.

When this court, then, with one judge citing a quibble involving sale or license, the other two dismissing literary works as so much "stock in trade," for all practical purposes prohibited writers from enjoying the fruits of their toil, one can only say that a travesty on justice was entered on the record, and that our situation approaches the desperate. And just to complete the picture of what the federal tax gatherer does to the writer, we may note that while his work is not property so long as he lives, it becomes property as soon as he dies, and the appraisers slap arbitrary valuations on it, so that the widow, before she can cash so much as a \$5 royalty check, has to put up gigantic sums in inheritance taxes, perhaps greater than any amount she will ever get from his literary works, which can easily slip into oblivion with his death.

But if one set of courts in the East have been abolishing all but a fraction of the writer's property another in the West have been extinguishing his title to even the small remnant he has left. The important cases, so far as infringement of copyright is concerned, are tried in the District Court at Los Angeles, for it is here that most moving picture cases originate, and it is the moving picture cases which involve large sums of money. As a rule, they are assigned to the Hon. Leon Yankwich, for the reason, apparently, that he takes great pride in being a literary expert. It would do violence to the truth to say he is not. He has read everything from pulp classics to Greek classics, and can discuss in the minutest detail stories, plays, and novels whose very titles the average writer would find difficulty to identify. Again, as one who has his origins in Europe, he has that reverence for literature which so many Europeans have, and so many Americans lack. Writers, to him, if not infra-divine, seem definitely ultra-human, and his personal courtesy to them is invariably marked. Yet this very notion of them gives him a

bias that is utterly disastrous to their professional interest. For when they become merely human, and want their money, and perhaps accuse a colleague of becoming all-too human, and committing a little piracy, he seems to fall victim to an acute, irritated disillusionment, and begins inventing fine-spun and far-fetched law for the benefit of the defendant. He has never, as a matter of actual record, given a verdict for the plaintiff. Members of the Los Angeles bar now advise clients NOT to sue in plagiarism cases. They believe, as they often put it, that a case cannot be won before Judge Yankwich "without 149 pages of carbon copy with typographical errors." For all practical purposes there is no federal copyright in the City of Los Angeles. Literary works may be stolen with perfect impunity, and in fact are stolen oftener than is commonly realized, for the picture companies make it a practice not to sue each other.



Stalking through the foregoing, casting his shadow over the whole dismal tale, is a villain, and it's the same villain whether the question be magazines, publishers, theaters, movies, radio, bureaucrats or courts. The writer has but one formidable enemy, and that is himself; like Jurgen, he lives in a hell of his own creation. It would put a much better face on the matter if it could be said that practices have grown up around him so malignantly that he is the victim of circumstances beyond his control. But, allowing for the conspiracies he faces, and the extraordinary attitude the Government takes toward him, this would not really be true. It would be hard to imagine a profession where practice carries so little weight as it does in writing. The grim, sorry fact which the writer must face, if he hopes to improve his situation, is that the practice is born with each deal as he makes it. The contract governs the case. Unless fraud is present, it determines all issues that arise.

As in the old law of prize, where evidence came solely from the capture itself, every pertinent fact in a writer's case will be found in his contract. It will do him no good to cite Jack London's contract, or point out that Winchell Smith had the benefit of certain practices that permitted him to get rich, which he is denied the benefit of. This would be so much chatter, if a court would listen to it at all. If Jack

London had a good contract, or Winchell Smith saw a few angles, it was simply because they were smart guys who made smart deals. The law begins at the opening "whereas" and it ends at "author sign here." No special rules have been made which favor the party of the second part. No tricks, except determination on one side and supineness on the other, have been played. It is right there on the table, six pages in a neat blue cover. And if we sign it as is, it is strictly and only our fault.

We don't have to sign, but we do sign. Why? Because we are writers and have certain characteristics that make it grotesquely easy to pull the wool over our eyes, to flatter us, to cajole us, to organize against us, and then to deal with us separately. To begin with, we secretly think Judge Yankwich is right, and that we are very, very special beings. Of course, we call it "artists," but we try to improve on God, so it cuts up to about the same thing in the end. Unfortunately, we have most of the defects peculiar to gods and few of their virtues, if any. We have a furious, jealous intolerance of all other gods; and indeed, each of us thinks himself the only God and holds all other gods to be phonies, and their followers heretics. Thus, concerted action is completely repellent to our natures. A gang of plumbers can sew up a city with extortionist regulations and hang together like wolves. But anybody who has tried to get three writers to act as a unit on the simplest matter knows what the difficulties are.

Another godlike trait is our illusion of invulnerability. It is almost impossible to get through our heads the fact that we are in any particular trouble, or that there is any reason we should do something about it. And still another is our illusion of infallibility. We feel we know everything, and when a publisher, explaining some monstrous swindle, says "it is customary," rather than go to a lawyer, or to another writer, or in any way admit that we don't know whether it's "customary" or not, we abjectly surrender whatever he wants, rarely taking even so much trouble about it as our wives would take over a questionable item in the monthly grocery bill. Only writers who have sweated out the bitter Gethsemane of the "option on two more books" can know the dreadful consequences of light acceptance of what purports to be "customary." And even when formed into guilds so that we have the appearance of organization, we actually achieve only the sketchiest cohesion.

For a century other laborers, having no Jovian complexes, have found the means, through strikes, lobbies, litigation, etc., to make vast gains in their status. Represented by big, strong, able men, they deal with corporate oppression and better their lot. Writers, however, have yet to develop anything describable as force. They call no strikes, hold no parades, intimidate no legislators. The four Guilds maintain correspondence, but there is no central body to steer their activities. They are still under the delusion that some over-worked "executive secretary" can attend to everything that needs attention, and that an unpaid president, elected on the basis of personal popularity, is all that is needed in the way of direction at the top.

The total score, after years of meeting, palavering, passing resolutions, and having the annual fight, is about as small as it would be possible to imagine. If, in the various guilds, the returning veteran has raised a noisy clamor, denouncing inaction, and demanding something be done, the conditions he complains of are typical of our trade. We lack force, we lack power, we lack results. Where we are at is precisely nowhere. Our gay, gaudy frigate sails on a literary Salton Sea, whose elevation is — 249' 6".



What is the remedy, if there is one? It is hereby submitted that the key to the whole question is the copyright, correctly described by Judge Chase as a monopoly for a period of years, under which the holder, for a consideration, permits this, that, or the other kind of exploitation, these restricted assignments having acquired the name of "rights." Now it shouldn't be true, but it is true, that the writer knows almost nothing about copyright, and is probably incapable of learning anything about it; if, in the 3,000 years since Homer, he still is ignorant, as a rule, even of HOW to copyright, it would seem indicated that he should admit he's not the type and flunk the test. But is there anything to prevent him from letting one central authority, under control of his guilds, take over this whole matter, become the repository of his copyright, lease the various "rights" arising from it for his benefit, and **never let one right get away from him for permanent possession, during the whole life of the copyright?**

What is advocated here is an American Authors' Authority, an

AAA to operate like the musicians' ASCAP — or more accurately, the SWPA, which does not include publishers — and fill in the hiatus visible in the scope of the existing guilds. For while these, in their various ways, deal with wages, hours, and working conditions, as labor unions do, and concern themselves with other things that can be grouped under the heading **opportunity**, or **advantage**, none of them deal in any effective way with his **rights**.

Yet his copyright, that precious, elusive thing from which all other rights spring, is the foundation of every business in which writing figures: theatre, magazine, book, radio, picture, television. It is the one gimmick which gives promise at last of endowing the writer with something describable as power. If we shall conceive the thing launched it would work like this: The writer will send all works to the Authority to be copyrighted in its name for his benefit. The authority will then say, "We shall copyright for assignment no works except from writers who have become members of the proper guild." This will take care of the outlaw contributor who became so menacing to ASCAP at the time of its fight with the radio studios. It will also say we shall lease no rights except to lessors who comply with the basic agreements of the guilds. The Screen Writers' Guild and the Radio Writers' Guild will say, "We shall permit our writers to work on no material not leased through the Authority," **and this will compel every writer in the country hoping for picture or magazine sale to send his work to the Authority for copyright before the magazines or publishers get it.**

This is a most important point, for magazines copyright in their own name, and in such a fight as the Authority would face, the question of who gets there first, of who holds this scrap of paper, is of the essence. The Authors' Guild will say to the magazines and the publishers, "We will not permit our members to dispose of any material to you except they copyright first through the Authority," and the Dramatists' will say the same to the producers.

Now here, it is manifest, if the Guilds only stick together and act tough, is a potential source of incalculable strength. For the Authority, naturally, is not going to perform this service, this intricate job of keeping track of contracts, titles, the status of each copyright in accurately maintained files, for nothing. It will charge a fee, and it will assess this

fee, not against writers, but against the lessors who obtain the material. If we assume this is 1% of the purchase price, and that it handles \$25,000,000 worth of materials a year, its revenue would be \$250,000, and for the first time the writer would have funds to take up certain matters that cry for attention.

First, there is the matter of a new copyright law, the present one being full of holes and flaws, its provisions not even extending to the radio, television, or the talking picture. Next there is the matter of a regularly maintained lobby in Washington, and of periodic lobbies in Sacramento, Springfield, and Albany, these being the places where most legislation affecting him is passed. Next, there is the matter of vigorous, aggressive prosecution of the writers' collective case in the courts, which would involve a discontinuation, on the part of the Authority, of the guilds' general policy of avoiding lawsuits if they can. The Authority, to be effective, must expect lawsuits, not only those brought against it, but those it will bring against the great corporate conspiracies noted above. The opportunity for improvement of the writer's status in this direction is prodigious. To advert, once more, to the decision in the Goldsmith case: if a copyright is not separable, as Judge Chase says, and there is no "sale" when picture rights are disposed of, what about these "rights" that picture companies, radio studios, magazines, and book publishers are sitting on? Do they exist? Have these somewhat predatory interests, in their eagerness to rook the writer, built up a vast structure made of shadows, that can be made to vanish with smart legal action, and leave the writer once more with the properties he was so shamefully stripped of? Who knows?

Courts, like Talleyrand, usually feel it their duty to take sides with the strong in their struggle with the weak, but if there is so much as 1% of a chance that this vast victory can be won, we certainly should have the means, in sufficiently big dimension, to fight for it.

And finally there is the matter of the individual writer's case when he is the victim of infringement. The point here is that the Authority would **itself** be the holder of copyright, and would come in as the plaintiff, and not merely appear as *amicus curiae*, as the Authors' League did in the Goldsmith case; so that instead of a tiny, forlorn, ineffectual suit brought by one lone writer, a smashing, relentless legal action would be

started, backed by careful, professional collection of evidence, and dependable, impressive witnesses.

We would have, then, a continuing, tireless battle for the writer's rights, in the place where they originate, which is a legislative body, and the place where they are enforced, which is a court. Our purview would include every right that a writer can claim, from his right to be taxed as fairly as other citizens are, to his right to share the wealth produced by his own property, to his right to a competitive market, to his right to join such organizations as he chooses, to his right of free speech, to any other rights that are just. It would in no sense be agential, or ever concern itself with deals, or with prices. It would not be geared to do so, and if it attempted to do so it would probably be in trouble under the federal statutes. This is a field for agents, and its policy would be to cooperate with agents, in the belief they do a great service to the writer. But if, as often happens, a studio barred an agent, it would come piling in with the cut-out open, to enforce the writer's right to a representative of his own choosing.

Nor would the Authority concern itself with wages, hours, working conditions, royalties, fees, or any of the matters best dealt with by the guilds. But on any question of rights, as for example the failure of a magazine, a publisher, a radio station, or a picture company to live up to its contract, it would take over, to enforce the agreement the guild had made. Eventually, on the question of the writer's right to security, it would envisage the levy of a straight tax on all corporations with which the writer deals, based on their audited gross, in order to maintain a pool out of which member writers would receive, according to their rating, a sum every year, or perhaps an annuity. This, of course, is in the future, for the Authority must become very strong before it can attempt such a thing. The immediate problem is what we do now, and it does seem that if the four guilds will take the power that awaits them, a massively powerful organization is possible in a very short time, with a \$1,000,000 kitty and a full-time tough mugg at the head of it.

That it will encounter opposition is obvious, and it would be hard to say which will drive at it hardest, the magazines, the publishers, the radio stations, or the picture companies. But the situation is favorable wherever one looks. Naturally radio stations are limited in number, but

there never was a time when new blood could get into business in other fields more easily, whether to start a new magazine, a new publishing house, or an independent picture company, or when more capital was available for these ventures. In Hollywood, particularly, the independent producers are quite hospitable to the idea of licensing material, instead of buying it outright, for this simplifies certain tax problems. When the Sale of Original Material Committee of the Screen Writers' Guild reported in favor of this system, it was thought radical; within a short time it was being accepted on all sides as the way the thing will be done. **What the independents will accept the majors must agree to.** Our chances, through diverting material to new outfits that will come to terms, are extraordinarily good. But we must have a united front. That, turned against us, has been our undoing. Turned the other way, it can permit us to win.



[Ed. Note: This proposal is the almost spontaneous outgrowth of the unrest, the dissatisfaction with present conditions being voiced by writers of all kinds, the movements that have started, almost of their own accord. The actual idea had its inception at a meeting of the Original Material Committee of the Screen Writers' Guild, in a discussion between Morris Cohn, the Guild's counsel, and Ring Lardner, Jr., Chairman of the Committee. The members were struck by the probability that a "repository," as it was called that night, probably bore a relation to the question of leasing material, instead of selling it, and the members had various discussions. The presentation was prepared by James M. Cain, after discussions with Mr. Cohn, F. Hugh Herbert, George S. Kaufman, Russel Crouse, Howard Lindsay, Mrs. Clarence Day, Samuel Moore, president of the Radio Writers' Guild, Herman Mankiewicz, Henry Myers, Martin Gang, Sigmund Romberg, Dalton Trumbo, William Pomerance, Robert Kopp, Craig Rice, Richard Burke, Walter Bruington, Walter Doniger, Lawrence Lipton, George W. Yates, Charles G. Booth, and others.

The following appendices explain how the proposed American Authors' Authority would work in detail.]

WHAT THE AUTHORITY WILL DO:

1. Copyright, in its own name for their benefit, all material produced by writers, whether for stage, screen, book, magazine, or radio, except material produced on salary and not subject to the writer's copyright.

2. Keep an accurate record of the copyright and all transactions made under it, so the writer will never have to depend on memory for the status of his

work, or suffer the consequences of a mislaid contract.

3. Clear all deals, and at once advise the writer if they involve angles of dubious legality, provisions contrary to accepted trade practices, or evidence of fraud.

4. Lease, but never sell, rights under the copyright, on behalf of the writer

and for his benefit, so that they **return** to him after the period of the lease, and **NEVER GET AWAY FROM HIM.**

5. Prosecute vigorously the writer's case in court, coming in, not as amicus curiae, as the guilds must do at present, but, in its capacity as owner of the copyright, as plaintiff, and massing experienced counsel and adequate evidence on his side.

6. Furnish a competent, aggressive field representative, prepared to deal with publishers, studios, and other corporate interests in all cases where a writer's rights have been infringed, and to insist that they be respected.

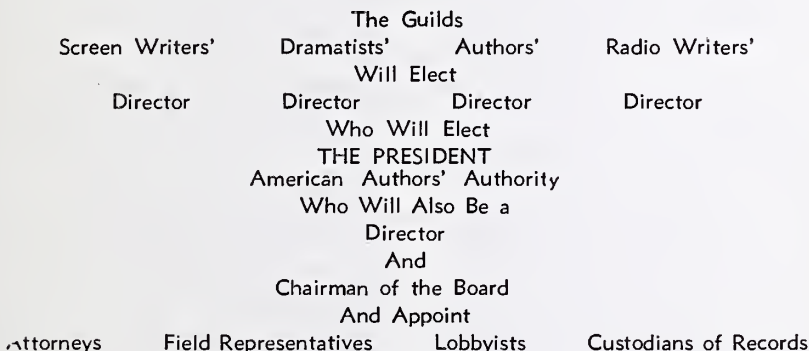
7. Prepare a new copyright law, and use every means, including expenditure

of funds and cooperation with other organizations having similar interests, to get it passed.

8. Maintain an aggressive, adequately financed lobby in Washington, and at such times as seem advisable, in Albany, Chicago, and Sacramento also, to further the interest of the writer, not only as to copyright, but all other legislative matters that affect him, and especially as to the monstrous, discriminating, indefensible taxes that now afflict him.

9. Fight, on all fronts and in every way, to promote, not the writer's financial advantage, or his repute, or the conditions under which he works, matters at present the concern of existing organization, but his **RIGHTS.**

THE SET-UP:



THE AUTHORITY

Will Maintain
 Offices
 In
 New York - Chicago - Washington - Los Angeles
 It Will Be In Touch
 In
 Sacramento - Springfield - Albany

HOW THE AUTHORITY WILL BE FINANCED:

1. At the outset, by small loans from the four guilds, to set up a secretariat, buy supplies on which to keep records, pay the expense of incorporation, etc., these sums to be repaid as soon as the Authority acquires a sufficient revenue of its own.

2. By a service charge, to be levied against all corporations doing business with it for each transaction that it clears, probably 1% of the gross amount involved. If a writer sold a serial for \$50,000, the Authority's fee would be \$500, and it would permit no publication until this was paid. If the serial were then sold as a book, with \$2,500 advance, its fee would be \$25, and if date-of-publication royalties were \$10,119.82, its fee would be \$101.20. If the book were then leased as a picture, at a rental of \$25,000 a year for seven years, its fee would be \$250 a year for seven years. And if, finally, it were leased to the radio as a weekly feature at \$500 a week, its fee would be \$5 a week.

3. Eventually, by a percentage, to be levied relentlessly against the audited gross of every magazine, every book publisher, every reprint publisher, every radio station, and every picture company, to be pooled into an American Authors' Fund, and divided among member writers, or used, in collaboration with insurance companies on an actuarial plan to be worked out, for their future security. This must be our ultimate goal, for we must end the preposterous notion, promulgated by the federal courts and fobbed off on us by every corporation with which we deal, that we produce "goods." We do not produce goods. Publishers do, in the books they sell, and magazines do, in the periodicals they sell and the space they sell in the periodicals, and the radio stations do, in the soap they sell and the time they sell to sell it in. But the writer produces properties, whose basic characteristic is that they are a source of wealth, and a share in that wealth we must have and shall have.

WILL THE AUTHORITY SUPERSEDE THE GUILDS?

The Authority not only will not make the slightest effort to supersede the guilds, but will have the result, and must have the result, if it is to function properly, of greatly strengthening the guilds and greatly increasing their membership, revenues, and effectiveness.

The guilds have evolved from the idea that the writer is primarily a craftsman, a laborer, to be organized like other laborers into guilds which closely resemble their unions. As such they have concerned themselves with his advantage,

and bargained collectively for him along the classical laborer's line of wages, hours, and working conditions. They have also concerned themselves with advising him as to possible markets, keeping him informed of the actual status of things in magazines, book publication, etc. They take a lively interest in the constant series of questions that concern him, and it is not even remotely contemplated that they slacken that interest, or in any way leave their present activities to the Authority.

WHAT THE GUILDS WILL GAIN:

1. All four of the guilds will gain, almost at once, a greatly increased revenue. For if the Authority will receive material for copyright, or the copyright for assignment on material already copyrighted, only from members in good standing of their proper guilds, then writers have to join up and pay up. Also,

for the first time, all the guilds will be in complete contact, working together on all their problems.

2. The Screen Writers will eventually break the iron collar which the studios have riveted on their necks, which is the backlog of properties the studios have acquired all these years, so that their

boast is: "We don't care what you writers do. With what we got, we can hold out for twenty years, and if you can, that's O.K. After that, we'll have some collective bargaining." In the long run this victory will be gained by the elimination of outright sale of any material whatsoever. And there is also the immediate possibility to be explored that the present holdings of the studios can be made subject to the Authority through united action of the screen writers. This might take the form of announcing that, as of a certain date, they will not work on any material except that whose copyright is owned by the Authority. Then, since to get a script done on one of these old properties, even a modernized rewrite of a previous script, they have to employ a member of the guild, and to

get him they have to get the copyright assigned, they are not sitting as pretty as they thought.

3. The Dramatists' and the Authors' Guilds, on new material, can offer their members the prospect of vigorous enforcement of their rights, and the abolition of vicious trade practices outlined in the main body of this article. On old material, as indicated above, the possibilities for virtual recapture of long-lost properties are in no way remote.

4. The Radio Writers' Guild, in a new, wild-cat field, can look forward to the creation of properties, by use of the copyright, that now go to the four winds or in wastebaskets. Also, by use of the copyrights, writers will own material now claimed by corporations for no reason except that they have lawyers.

WHAT THE WRITER WILL GAIN:

If it were only to keep track of his properties in an orderly way, and clear his deals on the basis of his records, the Authority would more than justify the writer in supporting it. For to the average writer producing novels, plays, skits, or whatever it is that he writes, his files are a jumble which even he can rarely be sure he is accurate about. His book *Wine, Women, and Weehawken* has been published and reprinted three times; it has been translated into Danish and Portuguese; it has been made the basis of a picture and has run serially in three newspapers. Does he own the radio rights? The French rights, or were these sold as part of the "foreign rights"? Were any of the reprint rights exclusive for a limited time? Does he still own the first serial rights? He doesn't know, and would have to search ten contracts to find out. And the worst of it is that some of his reprint authorizations were

given in the form of a letter, filed separately, and he has to depend on his memory to be sure he has accounted for these various documents.

To have all this data in orderly shape, to have it kept by experts who know exactly how to put their fingers on things, may mean thousands to his widow when he dies, for his estate will consist in the executor's knowing whether he has the right to dispose of this or that property or not. But in addition to this service, the Authority will be fighting his battles for him, will relieve him of that vague, secret, but just the same sickening conviction that he is a sap, that he is doing nothing on his own behalf, that he deserves about what he gets. Once the Authority gets going, it may not win all its fights, but the writer will know, whether he is in pictures, radio, magazines, or on his own as novelist or playwright, that the best fight that can be made is actually being made.

WHAT THE AGENTS WILL GAIN:

There is nothing in the plan, as considered now, that in any way opposes the agents, unless fraud is involved, in which case no honest agent can object to vig-

orous action on behalf of the victimized writer.

Indeed, most of what is contemplated makes the agent's work much easier, and

relieves him of functions he should never have been expected to discharge in the first place. It is not his fault that it is almost universal practice in the picture business to "sell" the picture rights in perpetuity; to expect him, alone and single-handed, or by collective action taken with his colleagues, to end this gyp, is simply to be unreasonable. His function is to serve as the writer's bargaining agent on individual deals, not to start long, expensive, and possibly protracted battles. Making deals and fight-

ing for rights are commonly done by different kinds of men with different purposes, and no writer of any sense would ever forget this.

In general, the Authority should leave the agent much freer to be his own man, to work for his writer at all times, without having to worry about some "in" on a picture lot, frequently maintained by apple-polishing that he secretly hates, for with the Authority behind him, as the representative the writer has the **right** to have, his "in" will be there whether he polishes apples or not.

CAN THE AUTHORITY DEVELOP AND GROW?

There is nothing in the plan, as at present conceived, to prevent the Authority from extending its purview, and admitting to part of its control, other organizations to an indefinite extent. Its function will be as holder of copyright and enforcer of copyright, and not only the copyright itself, but all parts of the copyright and all rights that bear on the use of the copyright. But if it turn out that it can function better, as for example in pressing for a new copyright law, by

accepting the copyrights of others besides writers, such as song writers, painters, designers, etc.; if it is clear that copyright is all one problem, and such holders of copyrights want to come in and the writers want to let them in, there is nothing in the plan which will prevent. The song writers will elect a director, a division will be set up to keep track of their licenses, and their special rights will become the concern of the Authority.

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THE AMERICAN AUTHORS' AUTHORITY

will be the main subject
on the agenda of the

SWG GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Monday, July 29, 1946

8:15 P. M.

California Room, Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel

All members are urged to study the proposal carefully before the meeting, and to come prepared to discuss it and offer suggestions relative to its endorsement or non-endorsement by the membership as a whole.

OPEN LETTER TO OUR FRIENDS, THE AMERICAN SCREEN WRITERS

HENRI JEANSON

WE KNOW each other only through our films. We know you very well and you know us very little, because, if your messages get to us regularly and in industrial quantities, ours, more often than not, are left on our hands. They are shown to you only by the greatest chance and by way of documentation, when one of your producers, having unbeknownst to us bought one of our films to deform it as he sees fit and mutilate its meaning, considers it worthwhile to invite you to a private showing before turning over to some directorial mercenary the job of getting up an American remake, answering all the moral and profit-motive requirements.

It is not the same with us.

Your films come into our country and circulate freely; they get into our furthest hinterlands; French papers subsidized by Hollywood take care of the promotion and familiarize our public with the names of your stars and directors. You are the only ones who are neglected by these genial sandwich-men-of-letters.

In film production writers are always held to be necessary nuisances. By way of rights, the only right the screen writer seems to have is to shut up and make himself scarce.

Incognito is the word for the screen writer.

These films, which you have thought up frame by line and line by frame, give us, believe me, the greatest of pleasure. First because they

HENRI JEANSON, distinguished French playwright, screen writer and journalist, is Secretary General of the French National Federation of Authors and Composers, and President of the Union of Screen Writers, a branch of the Federation of Entertainment Industries of the General Confederation of Labor of France. This article is translated by Harold J. Salemsen from the French newspaper, "Spectateur," of June 25, 1946. (For further news of the French film situation, see SWG Bulletin, page 42 of this issue.)

bring us news of you, and then because they teach us a great many things. Through them, we know how you live. And why. We know the names of the stores you go to and what cigarettes, automobiles, restaurants, refrigerators, music, and cemeteries you prefer. We are left unaware of none of the charming mystery of American women, nor of the manner in which your judges mete out justice, your prisoners are treated, your speculators rewarded, and your newspapers set up.

Your landscapes, your cities, your streets, your houses, your skies, your poverty, your wealth, your joys and your troubles — all are familiar to us.

Finally, your films have permitted us to read your minds, permitted us to appreciate you, to like you, and sometimes to admire you. Often we have cheered your revolts, your fears, your enthusiasm or your indignation. Your heroines, your dramas, your comedies, your fairy tales, your talent and your humor are all a part of our life. There is no memory of our youth — nor of our adulthood — in which you are not associated.

Yes, American screen writers, my comrades, you are truly old pals of ours . . .

But us?

Us?

What are we to you?

A bunch of anonymous dopes who, over there, on the other side of the world but only a few hours away from your studios, in a closed circuit and under extremely disagreeable conditions, are doing the same job as you . . . Try to put yourselves in our places for a few moments.

If someone were to come to you all of a sudden through no fault of your own and say: "The French who, at home, in France, boycott you and deny your existence, have decided that henceforth your films will be shown in your country, in Roosevelt's America, only four weeks out of thirteen. Moreover, they reserve the right in a period of two years to reduce these four weeks to three." Yes, if all at once someone said that to you, what would you answer? What would your reaction be?

You would answer correctly: "Whose business are they sticking their noses into? The French want to stop us from expressing ourselves, they want to gallicize us, to impose upon us through films, which are an irresistible means of propaganda, their politics, their tastes, their dis-

gusts, their habits and their merchandise. They want to exercise over us a moral, economic, industrial, social, literary and artistic influence. None of that, old girl! You can see that these sad sacks underwent five years of occupation. They've picked up all the characteristics of dictators."

That is what you would answer.

You would answer just about what we French screen writers are thinking today of the American statesmen who have undertaken to invade our screens and conquer our productions nine weeks out of every thirteen. . .

What is to become of us during that time?

And what is to become of our directors, our technicians, our decorators, workers, actors, musicians?

And what, too, will become of our public?

I know very well that you did not write the text of the Washington agreement.

You have too much imagination for that! . . .

Economic wars are fought the same way as just plain wars. Those who do the dying are never consulted. No opinions are asked from the ones who have to march. The powers simply dispose of their persons, their goods, their future and their *raison d'être*. They dispose of them in the most democratic manner in the world — just like a bunch of fascists . . .

Commercial agreements?

But a film is not a piece of merchandise, whatever the promoters may think. And by promoters I mean the exploiters of all kinds and of all backgrounds: politicians, distinguished economists, archbishops, theatre managers, demagogues, bankers, publicists, men of affairs and other real-life bit players.

A film, over and above everything else, is a literary work through its scenario and an artistic one through its direction. We writers and directors are not absentees when we work. Writing and directing mean giving of your actual presence. We try as best we can to put into our films the best and the finest of ourselves, to give to our works what little we may have in us of sincerity, irony, violence, wit, gravity, poetry,

humor, bitterness, grandeur and love — in a word everything that we have. We may not all be equally rich, but we are all equally generous. A film — and I am speaking here only of films of quality, the only ones that count, — a film always means a great deal of ambition. Always there is something of ourselves in these more or less successful films which, as you very well know, commit us and only us, writers and directors who spend our lives making the gift of ourselves to the unknown! . .

And now in Washington certain people have sold our souls.

Can souls really be worth all that on the international market?

Is there really anywhere a set of market quotations on the value of souls?

Well, these miserable agreements which spell out our death sentence in absentia — we simply do not accept them, and we come to you as friends asking you to take our defense to a court of appeals.

Please understand me: there is no question here of I know not what sordid competition and I know not what commercial and financial quarrel. American comrades, we gladly lend you our screens — not quite so much as some people would like, but very gladly, — and without any ulterior motive.

But then, lend us yours.

In civilized countries, one act of politeness calls for another.

We receive you in the grand ballroom after having led you up the stairway of honor.

Don't receive us shamefacedly on a step of the servants' entrance . . .

We no longer want to be undesirable aliens in America.

. . . Yes, yes, of course in New York, from time to time, through some overwhelming ruse, a French film runs in a little specialized theatre . . . a sort of cinema of tolerance . . . Immediately our papers tell our indifferent public about this phenomenon in the column devoted to quirks of the news, unusual happenings and slips that pass in the night.

. . . This is no way of doing things.

In order to live, the cinema must travel.

We would be very happy to be on your screens just as many days as you are on ours . . .

It would give us great pleasure to be known to you.

You will see, we will have a good time together, we will get along fine and you will find out that we're not such awful guys after all . . .

You will then wonder why people were so slow in introducing us to each other, why they built up between us so many walls and bulwarks of money, why we wasted so many beautiful years without knowing each other.

Well, it's very simply because someone found it to his interest to keep us separated, to isolate us in our continent, yes, it is because we have the same adversaries, the same foes. And who are these mutual enemies of ours?

First of all hypocrisy with her handmaidens, the moral, religious, puritanical, capitalistic and sectarian censorships; then the trusts and monopolies, in fact if not in name. Finally, the imbeciles whom more or less everywhere in the world one meets in studios and outside of them, the thousand-legged imbeciles, the innumerable imbeciles, male and female, whose imbecility extends to all of nature, the imbeciles who only too often get the best of the intelligent people . . . They know very well that our getting together, which they have tried so hard to put off, will mean a thousand disturbances for them, and that the agreements we will sign among ourselves will have over the ones signed in Washington the advantage of having been conceived by technicians of good faith for whom the film is something else than what is talked about in the dime-store magazines and in the corridors of Parliaments . . .

The cinema is also a bloc.

We are all part and parcel of the same thing.

We French writers are the ones who taught our public to like your films. There is a long list of motion picture people from Louis Delluc to Cocteau, by way of Antoine, Marcel Achard, Alexandre Arnoux, Pierre Bost, Beucler, Michel Duran, Nino Frank, Jacques Natanson, Steve Passeur, Carlo Rim, Pierre Scize, Philippe Soupault, Bernard Zimmer and the unforgettable Desnos, who showed our spectators (who did not always know how to see it) the true meaning of a film of Mr. King Vidor or Riskin. It was Louis Delluc, screen writer, poet, director, critic and novelist, who showed the crowd the way to Chaplin and who gave Chaplin his title of nobility. Delluc devoted a whole portion of his life, through

his writings, to exalting the American film. He was the Baudelaire of this Edgar Poe.

We are now waiting for the change we have coming from his coin.

Will you make the second step? Become our introducers to your compatriots?

After which, hand in hand, we will march on to mutual conquests.

You very well feel, I am sure, that these authors' rights, which are being refused to us with such obstinacy, can be gained by us only through common action. And the authors' rights for us mean not only the right to get a percentage of the receipts of our films and to participate in their destiny; they mean especially the right to say and to express everything, the right of the writer to dispose of himself, and himself in this case is his work . . .

Lost over here in this little Europe, we French screen writers have done no little work for you . . .

You undoubtedly have many lessons to give us, but we who know certain aspects of Hollywood can also teach you the thousand and one ways to remain independent.

You work at a factory-like assembly-belt.

We don't.

You are checked in and out of the doors of your factory.

We are not.

They force you to take on unwanted collaborators.

Not us.

The stars have a say over your work.

Not ours any more! . . .

Believe me, we could gain a lot from a long talk together . . .



Some time ago, when, two or three months after the Liberation, we created the Screen Writers' Union, we received a letter from Hollywood sent by the Writers' Guild:

Spontaneously the representatives of the American screen writers wrote us approximately in the following terms: "Happy to know you are still alive! We are with you for better or for worse. Let's keep in touch."

We answered immediately, because we were deeply moved by so much fraternal kindness . . .

For better or for worse . . .

American screen writers, my friends, we are shouting to you: "Help! Help! French films are being assassinated! Offer them a sanctuary on your screens!"

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PROGRESS IN THE TRADES

Whatever the implications, the following paragraph, reprinted from the Inside Stuff — Pictures column, Variety (N. Y.), June 12, appears to indicate growing awareness of the writer's role in film-making.

"Insiders got a snicker out of Bosley Crowther's review in the N. Y. Times Saturday (8) of 'Without Reservations' (RKO). Crowther and the Screen Writers' Guild have been in combat for several months over a SWG charge that he didn't give proper credit to writers on a picture. Times critic, in his 'Reservations' review, said: ' . . . there are several tiresome episodes and foolish attempts at sight gags to remind one that writer and director were laboring heavily to put over a stunt. . . . Jesse Lasky, who produced, and Mervyn LeRoy, who directed, should have manifested a little more taste — or should we charge the omission against the writer of the screen play, Andrew Solt? "

Another example is the June 22 issue of The Independent Film Journal. It reviews 14 pictures, with writers credited in 8 of the reviews, and story referred to in two others without mention of writers' names. Struck by the fact that more than half the writers received credit by name, and over two-thirds had their story contributions analyzed, we pulled a random back-issue of the same publication from our files. In its April 27 issue, The Independent reviewed 21 films: writers are credited in only two cases, one being Henry V, of which it is stated, "Shakespeare has been brought to the screen without a line of the original dialogue he wrote being altered." In only a couple of other reviews are there passing references to plot or script, although there are continual references to direction, camera work and even art direction.

These straws in the wind, it would seem, indicate a step forward in the Screen Writers' Guild's campaign to make critics keep in mind the fact that films are not hatched on the sound stages, but are based on screenplays written in advance.

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FROM "DO IT NOW" TO "WELL DONE"

JAMES ROOSEVELT

DURING the recent war in the Pacific the United States Navy developed two major projects based upon the motion picture. Best known of these was the work done by reportorial photographers and skilled craftsmen who went out to the battle zone, took pictures of the events as they happened and had the satisfaction and excitement of being "on the spot." These men did a magnificent job for which they have been very properly praised and feted.

The creation of training films became the second project. The skilled technicians who worked on these productions were part of an entirely different world. For the most part they stayed at home, following a fairly set and dull routine — doubly drab, perhaps, because of the fact that they had no personal interest in the scenes being shot. The work of these men was shrouded in comparative obscurity. They had none of the excitement of being in the fight. Their satisfaction must rest, as I am sure it did, on the knowledge that plugging along from day to day they turned out what the Navy needed to train the men to fight and use combat equipment (without which no action films could ever have been taken).

On approximately May 1, 1944, as a result of a dispatch from the Chief of Naval Operations (Admiral Ernest J. King) to the Commander of the Amphibious Training Command (Rear Admiral Ralph O. Davis), a photographic unit was formed which was to work in cooperation with

A film producer before the war, JAMES ROOSEVELT was a Colonel in the Marines and is now National Director of Political Organization for the Independent Citizens' Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions, and a daily news commentator on California radio stations KLAC, KYA and KXLA.

the Bureau of Aeronautics in the production of Amphibious Training Films. The need for such a training film program was pressing, as literally hundreds of thousands of personnel were being transferred into the Amphibious Forces, a branch of the service not even in existence at the commencement of hostilities.

In this fast mushrooming branch, personnel were being called upon to handle boats and equipment as new and different as the branch of the Navy in which they were being used. Training of the men in the use of this new equipment was essential — the men were needed — the equipment was needed — and the need was great. To accelerate the training of this branch of the Navy the training film program was initiated. The story of the accomplishments of some of the men of this program is the unsung story that I am glad to have the opportunity of placing in the record.

As it happened, for several months during the beginning of this work my duties included coordinating the efforts of the photographic unit, as Intelligence Officer on Admiral Davis' staff. I went back to sea with Admiral Davis, who had been placed in command of an Amphibious Group, when the program was only half-completed. It gave me a great pleasure to follow through on later developments, and to know of the final splendid record achieved by this gifted and splendidly trained unit.

We are all somewhat aware of the general steps which must be accomplished in the amphibious assault of an island stronghold from the initial bombardment of the beaches to the raising of the flag over the new won stepping-stone. In an 8-months period the Amphibious Warfare Training Film Unit, under the command of Lt. Harold C. Lund, USNR, completed 29 outstanding training films which provided basic training for hundreds of the million-and-one minor duties which go to make up the general steps so easily discernible in the newsreel accounts of combat action. The officer personnel participating in the project and their duties are listed below. I only wish I had the space to list all of the enlisted personnel as well.

These officers included Lt. Lund, officer-in-charge, Lts. J. E. Bauernschmidt and Harold L. Bigler, writers, Lts. John H. Jennings, Daniel P. Mannix and Vaughn Paul and Lts. (jg) Jerrold T. Brandt and David M. Bransby, directors, Lt. H. Lee Hansen and Lt. (jg) Sam W.

Cox, cameramen, and Lts. Richard E. Nelson and Thorington Putnam and Lt. (jg) John T. Dunphy, project supervisors, for the Navy, and Capt. Sidney Salkow, officer-in-charge of Marines, Capt. Oscar W. Miller, writer, and 1st Lt. William N. Witney and Lt. William H. Price, directors, for the Marine Corps.

Many of the above names are familiar to those of you who work in the motion picture industry. Most of them are now back once again in various capacities within the industry.

The general routine is fairly easy to describe. A subject such as the LCI (Landing Craft, Infantry), Description and Employment, having been approved by the Bureau of Aeronautics, would be assigned a priority rating Number One; and instructions were issued that a finished training film should be completed for distribution to the fleet and training facilities at the earliest possible moment.

To prepare a script we would secure the assignment of an officer entirely familiar with the technical employment of an LCI who would act as Technical Advisor. Upon completion of the script, and approval by Admiral Davis, a crew would be assigned, composed of the director, one script clerk, one first cameraman, one second cameraman, one grip and one gaffer. If an extra man was available he was given the job of general helper. All arrangements were then completed.

The Amphibious Training Base would then be required to secure the necessary equipment and personnel called for by the script. This arrangement exacted cooperation by many branches of the services, including the Army, Navy and Marine Corps, employed in the coordination of the amphibious warfare effort. Incidentally, this cooperation in the training phase was the basis for its spectacular success in the actual field of combat.

Shooting schedules varied from one day to several weeks. As soon as shooting was completed, the film was shipped to the depot at 1357 N. Vine St. where animation, scoring, commentary and editing were completed. Much of this work was done at Republic Studios, at times which did not interfere with regular activity at that studio. In other words, it was done long before breakfast and after the regular civilian employees had gone home for supper. Perhaps some of the studio employees, just as they were going to work, will recall seeing Mr. Harlow

Wilcox, one of the few civilians used in the project, leaving the studio accompanied by a Marine crew with a completed picture under their arms. Incidentally, many of the listeners to Fanny Brice, Fibber McGee and Molly and many others, did not realize that Mr. Wilcox's contribution to those radio programs never interfered with his commentary or dubbing in of special voice for the Navy project — for Mr. Wilcox gave many a night and early morning to this Navy work.

The completed film was always previewed at the Amphibious Training Base by that branch of the service most affected and by Admiral Davis personally, or his designated representative, and then immediately dispatched to the forward areas and other distribution points. Negatives were then sent to the training film distribution unit in New York City where additional prints were made and distribution accomplished to a long list of activities throughout this country and abroad, as directed by the Bureau of Aeronautics.

In the simple recitation of this routine lie hidden many human interest stories. In the first place, unlike the beautiful set-up of the Army Signal Detachment at Culver City, all of the Navy men worked under field conditions and under tremendous pressure for the accomplishment of the finished product. Time was of the essence, to use the approved term.

We faced a vicious circle; the completion of numerous pictures, within minimum production time, in order to decrease the required training time, was the accomplishment desired — BUT neither interference nor impediment to training was to be allowed under any circumstances. That required ingenuity and these men had it.

Let me give you an example. On temporary duty at Pearl Harbor, I found that some desired footage could be accomplished at that location during the loading operations for the landing at Leyte Gulf in the Philippine Islands. These shots included the use of mortar-firing from landing ships and the salvage of stranded LVTs (Landing Vehicles, Tracked). This meant photographing an actual loading operation which would allow no reshooting.

I sent a dispatch to Coronado, which reached the unit on a Thursday night. The team with their equipment arrived in Pearl Harbor on the following Sunday morning under the command of Capt. Salkow and Lt.

Putnam. In about a 10-minute interview, I outlined where they were to go and roughly what to expect. By noon of that same day I was on my way to Coronado and Capt. Salkow and Lt. Putnam with their crew were at sea on an LST. Four weeks later they were back in Coronado with some wonderful footage, accomplished without disrupting the loading operation and with no guidance except their own genius, determination and excellent understanding of how to accomplish an order which merely says — DO IT NOW.

Perhaps the most difficult job of all came in photographing some of the necessary angles for pictures which required action off-shore, especially when there were no spare craft to turn into camera boats. That one was solved by a call to the Santa Ana Air Base where arrangements were made to use a United States Navy blimp in filming the picture illustrating actual operation by LCIs (Landing Craft, Infantry). The somewhat discouraging drawback in the arrangement was the simple statement that we could have the use of the blimp for one day only. By mutual cooperation and frequent interchange of duties, the job was done in ONE DAY: but it will be a day remembered for some time by that Flying Crew.

THE DAY turned out to be traitorous to the reputation of Southern California. It was dark and gloomy with a ceiling of less than 300 feet, but as the blimp came down through the overcast the exercise started. The necessary footage was shot and a complete technical picture was photographed. To my knowledge, however, no Air Medals have been awarded this photographic unit.

A further interesting point resulted from the taking of this picture. After processing of this film in Hollywood, the print was brought to Coronado for its first run and approval. The technical advisor pointed out that one of the LCSs approaching the beach was firing short rounds, which in actual combat might have resulted in a barrage of our own troops instead of a bombardment of the beach. This, of course, made it an even more excellent training film — even though it had not been planned that way. The captain of the LCI and its crew were shown the film and the possible effects of firing short rounds. That particular captain and crew, a number of months later, took part in the bombard-

ment of the beaches of Leyte. It is a matter of official record that no short rounds were fired in that engagement.

The men of this unit certainly knew the problems of going on location. From the Amphibious Training Base on Coronado up the coast to Oceanside, Camp Pendleton, San Luis Obispo and off-shore to San Clemente Island and Pearl Harbor, under all kinds of working and living conditions, the show went on at top speed. The cast was nearly always large, the sets and props up-to-date — indeed, often in the secret-development state. At one time 3 camera crews were putting 1000 troops, 7 LCIs and a blimp through their paces.

On January 5, 1945, the Amphibious Warfare Training Film Unit reported the completion of all field production work. In 8 months, an unparalleled record had been completed. Not only the scope and imagination of this work accomplished, but the speed and quality of production, are something that every man who participated in this job can, and should, be proud of.

The result of their work was reflected in the success of our own forces at Saipan, Tinian, Iwo Jima, the Philippine Islands and Okinawa. The Japs felt its full impact. These men, officers and enlisted, expected no praise. Theirs was a job to do. The only fitting comment I know of is the deserved Navy commendation, "WELL DONE."

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A NOTE ON ADVERTISING

★ Two instances of perverted film advertising drew comment from many writers during past month. The Open City, the magnificent Italian almost-documentary story of the Roman people's resistance to Naziism, is advertised by Los Angeles' Esquire Theatre with a quote (out of context) from Life magazine: "Its plain sexiness has seldom been approached by Hollywood." Lillian Hellman's The Searching Wind, a straight story of political events of the past two

decades, is trade-advertised under the catchline: "What chance had the woman he married against a love like this!" Both of these cases are highly reminiscent of last year's advertising of Colonel Blimp as a story of "life and loves." Do the studios still honestly wonder why audiences are disappointed, even by films as excellent as the three mentioned, when they have been misled into expecting something totally different from what they get?

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THE DOCUMENTARY FILM ERA

NOEL MEADOW

THE documentary film, regarded as one of our chief warborn boons, need not be an end-of-the-war casualty, like female welders.

Observers in the fields of both education and the cinema have expressed concern over the apparent circumstance that the documentary film, which gave such bright promise of permanence, went into comparative eclipse on V-J Day. Their disappointment is justified, but it need not turn to despair.

No one will dispute that there is a genuine social need for a program of documentary film production, but no one has yet adequately explained the solution.

There must be an incentive. During wartime, the incentive was the indoctrination of military personnel and the civilian population with our war aims and the methods of their achievement. The need for such accomplishment was critical and urgent.

Perhaps no such immediacy remains. The incentive to produce these films must therefore be the most powerful, practical one that can implement any goal. And that's profit.

I am convinced that there is profit for producers in documentaries. True, they may not have, in the peacetime product, the strong dramatic background and motif lent by war. It will be necessary to resort to an

NOEL MEADOW, executive editor of *The Writers' Journal*, has engaged extensively in film production and exhibition, having been associated with such wartime films as *One Inch From Victory* and *What Price Italy?*, and having at one time owned the Stanley Theatre and the 55th St. Playhouse in New York.

orthodox merchandising technique, and it can be done with honesty and dignity, and without tawdry hippodroming.

A preliminary vehicle for distribution could easily be the newsreel theatres, which in my opinion offer poorly integrated programs. Our newsreels are not, and of course cannot be, thorough. They can be compared with a newspaper that printed only headlines.

Newsreel theatres could give both form and substance to their programs, without changing their essential purpose, by building everything around a documentary of less than feature length. This could be supplemented by some timely newsreels and perhaps a few comic cartoons or other short subjects.

Because the documentary could be easily as valuable to us in peace as it was in war, it would not be surprising if a progressive theatre operator were to open a house with an original policy of that sort. The documentary might, in the interests of merchandising (known to the trade as showmanship), be relieved of its somewhat heavily academic name in favor of something like Fact Film.

Such a venture would cater to movie enthusiasts of all ages, and would be especially interesting to youth.

As for production, the cost would usually be remarkably low, what with the present available resources in film libraries.

Recourse would of course be had to the virtually limitless supply of newsreel shots, whose present moth's existence could be vastly prolonged by inclusion in a documentary where these fleeting shots would gain added meaning by integration in a broader canvas.

There is no phase of our modern social, economic, industrial and, perhaps, political activities that cannot be recorded on film — comprehensively and, above all, entertainingly.

The documentary is of prime importance to us today, and will bring to history incalculable enrichment.

Looks as if it's up to private enterprise.



A GUILDS FILM LIBRARY

CHARLES A. PAGE

DURING the last eighteen months in Europe I have witnessed the great interest displayed by French, Swiss, Dutch, Czech, Italian, Belgian, as well as British and Swedish, motion picture technicians in the craft achievements of their American colleagues during the past six years of informational black-out. As of this writing, they are still uninformed, particularly in France, where the deadlock in quota negotiations has prevented the showing of any recent pictures. (This situation has now been remedied by the Franco-American distribution agreement. ED.) The informational blackout did not, of course, apply to Britain and Sweden.

This desire of the craftsmen — the directors, writers, cameramen, cutters — to renew personal and professional acquaintance with colleagues of other lands has given impetus to a succession of international film festivals at which, unfortunately, the Hollywood Guilds have not been represented.

The first was held at Basel, Switzerland, in September, 1945, which I attended as official observer for the United States Government. This was followed by international film congresses in Lugano and Lucerne, Switzerland, Brussels, and pre-congress in Paris looking to the establishment of an International Federation of Cinematheques (Film Libraries). The official International Film Festival which was to have taken place in Cannes, France, in 1939, will take place there this September. This active interest in the international aspect of films, shared by the British, has apparently not been given consideration by the Hollywood Guilds.

It is concerning the International Cinematheque Congress shortly to take place in Paris that I wish to write you. What is a cinematheque?

CHARLES A. PAGE, until recently Cultural Attaché of the U. S. Embassy in Paris, was active in Hollywood literary and political circles before the war. He is due soon to take a cultural position with the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

It is a national Film Library which has two principal functions: the maintenance of an archive of films; and the encouragement of the non-commercial utilization of films of historic and artistic interest, be they entertainment or documentary. In this country, the Library of Congress Film Section is not a cinematheque, but merely an archive. The closest to an American cinematheque is the Film Section of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, brilliantly directed by Iris Barry.

On the continent, all cinematheques are either government institutions, as in Prague, or receive government subsidy, as in London, Paris, Brussels, Basel. It is not important here to analyze the differences in operation of the various cinematheques; it is interesting, however, to note that the congress soon to take place in Paris will endeavor to create an international federation of all cinematheques, and it is hoped that the Museum of Modern Art will participate. Such a federation would seek the standardization of utilization (distribution) practices in all countries, through the establishment of international by-laws for all cine-clubs to insure the non-commercial character of exhibitions. It is contemplated that these by-laws will conform to British-American standards in order to satisfy British and American producers, because of the dominance of the British and American product. Such standardization would permit the free flow of films for non-commercial use from country to country, and greatly stimulate the study and appreciation of foreign films.

On the more theoretical side, the Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinematographiques, of Paris, is contemplating an international study on the psychology of the motion picture, to be divided under two heads: 1. The motion picture as a faithful portrait of the life of the people of the producing nations; 2. The motion picture's influence on different strata of society.



In order that the Hollywood Guilds may participate in this international ferment of interest in the techniques of their foreign colleagues (in the scripts of Lundstrom, the camera work of Louis Page, Bunuel's direction in *L'Age d'Or*, for example), it is proposed that a Guilds Film Library be established in Hollywood by an association of five Guilds

and the local university or universities. Such a Film Library would undertake to:

(a) make available to Hollywood guildsmen and university students exhibitions of classic (American and foreign) and contemporary (foreign) films of historical and artistic interest;

(b) promote discussion of techniques among guildsmen;

(c) provide a forum for visiting foreign craftsmen;

(d) maintain an important library of reference books on the motion picture, encourage the translation of important foreign works;

(e) stage visual exhibitions on various international aspects of the motion picture art;

(f) encourage the formation of cultural motion picture clubs, as in Europe;

(g) maintain liaison with all European cinemathèques; and hence with current tendencies in craftsmanship of all European countries;

(h) exchange publications and articles with European countries — France, for example, is most anxious to receive *The Hollywood Quarterly*, *The Screen Writer*, the proceedings of the Writers' Congress; Hollywood should have the *Bulletin du Cinema Educatif*, *La Nouvelle Revue Cinematographique*, *L'Ecran Francais*, etc.;

(i) maintain liaison with the film sections of UNO and UNESCO;

(j) participate on the Guild level in international film congresses and festivals;

(k) acquire, as finances permit, a film library;

(l) undertake research studies, such as those proposed by IDHEC, on a Guild level, to be published by the university presses.



The Guilds Film Library would have the active encouragement of the Museum of Modern Art, would be serviced by the Museum of Modern Art as one of its most important outlets, but would be completely autonomous. The GFL would maintain a center consisting of a small theater seating not more than 100 persons, a club-room, library, offices, and a film vault. Membership would be confined to 1200 persons, 200 each from five Guilds, and 200 from the universities and associated groups. Membership dues would be \$20 per year, and all functions of the GFL would be free to its members, including 50 film

programs per year. Each participating Guild would see the weekly program on a fixed night each week. (This point of free entrance, and to members only, is essential to participating with the Museum of Modern Art and the continental cinematheques.)

Until the GFL is able to build up a film library of its own, material would be rented from the above-mentioned two sources, and from the Producers' Association. The executive board of GFL, which would be incorporated as a non-profit organization, would consist of a representative of each of the five participating Guilds, of the university group, and the director of GFL (non-voting except in the case of a tie).

The Guilds would have to provide initial underwriting in the amount of \$15,000, to be refunded over a period of five years, after which time GFL would be self-supporting. Since I have been out of the country for nearly five years, the following figures may be way off, but will serve as an example:

Annual rental of GFL center	\$3,000
Initial renovation	2,000
Office equipment	1,000
Projection equipment (35mm & 16mm)	5,000
Initial working capital	4,000
Total	\$15,000

The annual budget would be as follows:

Annual income from 1200 members @\$20	\$24,000
Annual expenses:	
Rent	\$3,000
Salaries — Director	5,000
Assistant	3,000
Operator	2,000
Secretary	1,800
Clerk	1,200
Refund to Guilds	3,000
Rental of films	1,000
Operating expenses	2,000
Reserve for purchase of prints, publications, travel, etc.	2,000
	<hr/>
	\$24,000 \$24,000

I feel that this could be a major contribution to international understanding through the film medium. I propose that fullest discus-

sion of this project take place both on a Guild level (between SWG and other Hollywood Guilds) and on an individual level (between readers of the magazine).

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A LETTER

JEAN HERSHOLT

President, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences

I AM very glad to have this opportunity to state the Academy's position about a film library. While I was in New York last month, I had several conferences with Iris Barry about the expansion of the film collection of the Academy with the idea of making it comparable to the film library in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Miss Barry expressed keenest interest and assured the Academy of the full cooperation of the Museum. The Academy film vault now holds a collection of 800 war and documentary films of the United Nations and these films are available for restricted use.

As you know the Academy has recently purchased the old Marquis Theatre seating one thousand people, which is to be re-named the Academy Award Theatre. One of the reasons we purchased the building was because there is ample space for us to build four film vaults in the old basement and we have been informed by the Fire Department that such construction will be permitted in that area. The building freeze at the present time prevents our providing this vault space when we move the Academy offices out there next month, but the vaults will be the next item on our building program. The Academy has already been offered many prints of old films, unusual non-commercial pictures and documentary and educational material which we feel will be of value to students of motion pictures. I agree completely with Mr. Page's statement that the Library of Congress collection contributes more of an archive than a research library.

The Academy will attempt to build a useful reference and we will welcome suggestions and cooperation from the Hollywood Guilds whose members we hope will be our most frequent patrons.

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SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD, INC.

AFFILIATED WITH AUTHORS' LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.
1655 NO. CHEROKEE AVE., HOLLYWOOD 28, CALIFORNIA

S . W . G . B U L L E T I N

GUILD MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

The SWG membership meeting, originally scheduled for the Hollywood Roosevelt, July 12, will be held there Monday evening, July 29, 8:15.

On the agenda will be discussion of the American Authors' Authority, proposed by James M. Cain in this issue, reports on veterans' reemployment, current negotiations of contracts, details concerning the Franco-American film agreement, and such other matters as may properly come before the membership.

Two emergency membership meetings were held, one on July 1, to consider the strike which had just been called by the Conference of Studio Unions, and another on July 3, to discuss the issues of the strike, which at that time had been settled. The latter meeting aired the views of various members within the Guild as to the SWG position in such a situation. An analysis of that discussion is presented in Philip Dunne's report below.

SWG AND THE STRIKE

For the second time within the space of a few months, the Screen Writers' Guild has found itself faced with an industrial crisis in the motion picture industry. And for the second time, we faced it unprepared. The dispute which resulted in the recent strike was not of our making. We were not consulted before the striking unions walked out, nor were

we invited to participate in the settlement. Yet every one of us was affected. As individuals and as a Guild, we found it necessary to make decisions involving our entire future as an organization, and to make them suddenly, without warning and after only the hastiest of discussions.

It is all very well to say that the writers should maintain an Olympian detachment in the face of a dispute among the producers and the two groups of unions involved. Yet which one of us can honestly say that he was detached? All of us, to some degree, were emotionally and physically affected. Some of us, as individuals, apart from the Guild, found ourselves morally incapable of crossing the picket lines. Others, while finding it unpleasant to cross them, put our contractual obligations to our employers first. Each of us had his opinion, an almost infinite variety of opinions. Our sympathies and partisanship were aroused. We were subjected to accusations and counter-accusations. We were too pro-CSU, we were too anti, we were Reds, we were scabs, ad infinitum and ad nauseam. We suffered as a Guild, we suffered as professional craftsmen and we suffered as plain wage-earning citizens. Whenever there is a work stoppage in the industry, or even the threat of a work stoppage, the screen writer, with every other wage-earner, must pay for it out of his own pocket.

As we go to press, the strike is settled and apparent peace reigns in the

industry. But we must be awake to the fact that this is not true peace, but only an uneasy truce. The underlying causes of industrial unrest are still with us; to mention a few of them: the rising cost of living, the defensive militancy of the trade union movement in the face of national reaction and the prospect of a new depression, labor factionalism within the industry, the structural weaknesses of the American Federation of Labor, with consequent jurisdictional differences, the unwillingness of some producer strategists to accept the fact that democratic trade unionism is to become a permanent feature of the Hollywood scene. Tomorrow, next week, next month, another crisis may burst upon us, as suddenly and as devastatingly as the last one did. And again, under present conditions, we will not be prepared for it.

Why?

It has been said that we found ourselves in a dilemma this time because the Executive Board had no policy. This is not true. The Board had a policy, a sorry one to be sure, but still the only policy possible under our Basic Agreement with the producers. The clause which dictated this policy reads as follows:

"The Guild agrees that it will not call or engage in or assist any strike against the Producer during the term hereof, and will during said term order its members to perform and will use its best efforts in good faith to induce its members to perform their services as writers for the Producer and to continue to accept employment as writers with the Producer even though other persons or groups of persons may be on strike; it being understood that if the Guild complies with said obligations it will have discharged its full responsibility under this Article II so far as the individual conduct of its members is concerned."

The Board faithfully fulfilled its obligation. It ordered the membership to go to work, only pointing out that each individual member had a legal right to refuse to cross the picket lines if, in his judgment, he thereby ran the risk of suffering physical violence or public in-

dignity. The Screen Actors' Guild and the Screen Directors' Guild, with similar clauses in their contracts, issued similar instructions to their respective memberships.

The result was to throw the onus of decision on each individual member. It was as if we had no Guild. We had fought for a Guild, spent our time and money to create it, and then found it powerless to act in exactly the sort of crisis in which a Guild should act. The Actors and the Directors were just as impotent as we were. In a situation of great danger to us all, these three potentially powerful groups within the industry could offer their members no positive leadership and only the vaguest hope of adequate protection. Is it any wonder that we were ignored by the principals in the dispute? Can we blame such hard-headed realists as Messrs. Sorrell, Brewer, Mannix and Kahane for not consulting us before they flung down the gage? Can we blame them if they do it to us all over again?

What can WE do about it? At an informal meeting of the membership held on July 3rd, the day after the strike settlement, the following recommendation to the Executive Board was approved with only two dissenting votes:

"That the Screen Writers' Guild Executive Board and Labor Committee, in cooperation with the Actors' and Directors' Guilds, be urged to work toward the elimination of the 'yellow dog' portion of the no-strike clause of the Minimum Basic Agreement."

If the Actors, Directors and Writers, united, thus free their hands for action, there may never arise another strike situation in Hollywood. The weight of the three talent guilds, thrown on the side of a just complaint, against an unjust one, can force an immediate settlement in almost any conceivable industrial crisis.

It is not our purpose here to propose an immediate alliance between the three guilds. The Guild, however, has everything to gain at this time in more closely coordinating its activities with those of the Actors and Directors. What we now

propose is a joint step forward. It is to be hoped that such a step will lead to others, to a firmer union of ideas and action, but even if our progress at this time is limited to this one step, we will have advanced a long way towards the goal of industrial peace in Hollywood.

— Philip Dunne.

RELATIONS WITH ENGLAND

SWG has received from member John Paxton, now on an assignment in England for a Hollywood studio, a letter dealing with working permits for Americans on jobs within the British film industry, pertinent passages of which follow.

Paxton to SWG

"... We arrived here, in our innocence, with labor permits, assured by the Rank Organization that all arrangements had been made for our operation.

"... The policy of the Association of Cine-Technicians, which confronted us, and prohibited us from working, is stated in the enclosure (see below) ...

"We had several meetings with the A. C. T. heads immediately.

"They were badly misinformed about Hollywood labor. They had considered IATSE representative of the whole industry and formed (their) policy as a result of their past inability to get Bioff or Browne to discuss anything approaching reciprocity. We had to go into the whole history of the recent strike (Paxton refers to the 1945 strike — Ed.), which amazed them; they were particularly impressed by the fact that our sketch artist, Maurice Zuberano, was out against IATSE. ...

"After these discussions, they modified their original demands: a British standby in each category. They were reasonable and sympathetic. They contended, however, that the basic policy must stand until it could be taken back to the membership for reconsideration.

"As a stop-gap, they agreed eventually to let us proceed if we would get a statement from each of the Hollywood unions and guilds concerned, agreeing in principle to some sort of reciprocity and ex-

pressing a willingness to negotiate on it.

"Eddie Dmytryk and Ruby Rosenberg have written the Screen Directors' Guild, Zuberano the CSU, Bill Watts the Dialogue Directors'.

"As far as the Screen Writers' Guild is concerned, of course, the question is purely rhetorical. No writers, British or otherwise, are prevented from working in Hollywood. However, considering the misapprehensions and fears that exist here, it would help now and in the future if the Guild could give ... a statement of formal policy, agreeing to the principle of reciprocity between British and American screen writers."

A. C. T. Resolution

The following is the resolution adopted in London on April 27-28, 1946, by the Association of Cine-Technicians and referred to in Paxton's letter above:

"We, the members of the A. C. T., reaffirm our previous attitude to the entry of foreign technicians into this country, viz: that the interchange of technicians between one country and another on an agreed reciprocal basis is desirable and in the interests of both the technicians and the industry generally and internationally. The Annual General Meeting therefore welcomes the Agreement negotiated with the French film technicians and the possibility of similar agreements with other countries. It instructs the General Council to proceed vigorously with the implementation of this policy, but meanwhile to continue to oppose the entry of technicians from those countries which refuse to negotiate a reciprocal agreement and which resist the employment of British technicians in their native country."

Franco-British Agreement

The following is the agreement negotiated, prior to the above resolution, between British and French technicians:

"EXCHANGE OF TECHNICIANS: The undersigned, at the meeting on August 30th, 1945, of the Permanent Committee of Technicians and Specialist Film Workers of France with Anthony Asquith (President) and George H. Elvin (General Secretary) of the Association of Cine-

Technicians of Great Britain, affirm their agreement to the principle of the future exchange of technicians and specialist workers between France and England. Such exchange shall be made on the basis of an equal number from each category to be employed at not less than the minimum trade union rate in the respective countries.

"It is agreed to discuss the decision with the Film Producers of the two countries so as to make effective as speedily as possible this exchange of technicians and specialist film workers which is mutually desirable in the interests of the development of film technique amongst the members of both Trade Unions.

"Signed in Paris, August 30th, 1945."

(For England)	(For France)
ANTHONY ASQUITH	BERTHOMIEU
President	HAYER
	LAMY
GEORGE H. ELVIN	HOUDET
General Secretary	PIGNAULT
	BONNET

SWG to Paxton

In consideration of the documents above, the SWG Executive Board notified member Paxton that "we would be agreeable in principle to reciprocity." The Board requested clarification on which organization or organizations we should be corresponding with, in order that reciprocity might be made effective.

RELATIONS WITH FRANCE

A preliminary letter from Henri Jeanson, President of the French Union of Screen Writers, dated May 27, 1946, and reading as follows, was received by the President of the SGW:

Jeanson to Lavery

"We are deeply grateful for your guild publication which you have been sending us regularly, and which we turn over to our sections concerned for close study.

"We would like to be able to give you news of our own activities; unfortunately, our means do not permit us to publish

as complete and interesting a magazine as yours.

"However, we have sent you under separate cover a copy of our membership bulletin.

"But if our means are limited, our ambition is not and we are conducting an energetic struggle for the defense of authors' rights: in fact, we hope to arrive at a remuneration for scenarists' work based entirely on a royalty principle, specifically through a percentage of gross receipts in the theatres.

"However surprising this may seem to you, it is not impossible that we may obtain effective results by combining legislative and direct action.

"You will be well aware that any result obtained in this direction would have more or less immediate repercussions on the situation of scenarists in other countries.

"And you will be equally aware that a true defense of our common interests can be based only on international legislation covering authors' rights.

"That is why we are hereby proposing to you, if you are willing, that we establish relations between our respective organizations which can become closer and more cordial and lead to the exchange of all information concerning the situation of scenarists and of authors' rights in our respective countries.

"We deeply hope that you will be good enough to enter into correspondence with us on this subject and beg you to accept the assurance of our sentiments of cordial confraternity."

Chavance to Lavery

This was followed shortly by an airmail letter, dated June 26, from Louis Chavance, Secretary-General of the Screen Writers' Union, and reading:

"Please take note of the enclosed article, in the form of an open letter to our American screenwriter friends, written in the newspaper *Spectateur* for June 25, 1946, by our president, Henri Jeanson.

"You will recognize in this article his wit and his style as a polemicist, but the facts that he relates are deeply stirring up the minds of motion picture circles in

France and we want to bring this as quickly as possible to your notice.

"If you could communicate this to your members and perhaps publish it in your bulletin, we would be infinitely grateful to you.

"It goes without saying that if a polemic were opened in this connection, we would be glad to submit, to the newspaper **Spectateur** and to all the magazines in which our members write, any reactions you might send us.

"I insist on pointing out to you the extreme interest which the film industry is taking in these agreements and the importance which we put upon your reaction."

The enclosure, of course, was the article which appears on Page 19 of this issue.

On the Film Agreement

Under separate cover, as announced, we received the first issue of FILM, the bulletin of the Coordinating Committee of Unions of Technicians and Workers of French Motion Picture Production. From its columns, we translate the illuminating article by Louis Daquin, Secretary-General of the Union of Technicians, titled *The Agreements and the Prestige of France*:

"It is abnormal for agreements to be reached concerning the motion picture in the course of discussions covering over-all commercial and industrial questions.

"We do not deny that films are a commodity, but what is the 'economic value' of this commodity as against its 'human value'? What would this commodity be without the cooperation and contribution of the creators, the technicians, the engineers and the workers who participate in its making?

"No, it is not decent to try to settle the future of the films at the same time as that of machines or automobiles!

"Moreover, if we put ourselves, as the contention has been, on a strictly commercial basis, it is curious to note that, for a branch of our industry which was among the most productive, we permit ourselves the extravagance of purchasing

\$3,000,000 worth of merchandise per annum, while we are lacking in so many objects of primary necessity.

"In reality, and we must have the courage to say so, America is shoving its films down our throats, for commercial reasons of course, but especially to get the advantage of the influence which can be wielded by the prodigious and powerful means of expression which is the cinema.

"There are weapons other than the atomic bomb, weapons so important that some people would like to have a monopoly over them.

"We want our American friends in the ranks of creators, technicians and workers to know that we feel that American films of quality, on the same basis as all foreign films having a real artistic or intellectual value, must show on our screens and must be seen by the entirety of the French public.

"But we want these international exchanges to be established on a footing of equality and in such a way that they may not be interpreted as an attempt at colonization. We want the French creators, players and technicians also to have the right to express themselves and to bring to the world, through the cinema, the imprint of our culture, the evolution of our artistic and intellectual tendencies, the expression of our social life and of our historic traditions.

"It is not only the freedom of work, the right to work, which we are defending with our demand that these agreements be revised, but also the freedom of thought, the right belonging to every creator, whatever his means of expression, to address to the world, through the medium of his work, the message of his country."

SWG Action

Daquin's reference to "an attempt at colonization" is based upon the Blum-Byrnes agreement on showing American films in France which, in the guise of protecting French productions for four of the 13 weeks in each quarter, actually puts a limit on how many French films

can be shown in France, as explained in Jeanson's article.

Press reports have been — perhaps intentionally — confusing, but the request for action sent by the French trade unions is clear.

On the basis of the foregoing documents and other sources, a complete analysis of the French film situation was made at the SWG Executive Board meeting of July 8, and referred to the membership meeting, July 29, for further action.

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C O M M U N I C A T I O N

Miss Patricia Tucker, of the staff of Associated Magazine Contributors, Inc., has sent us the following analysis of the aims and functioning of that organization, which it is felt should be of interest to creative writers everywhere:

For the first time, America's leading artists, writers and photographers are pooling their talent and their cash to publish a magazine exemplifying their own ideas of what a general, mass-circulation periodical should be and how it should operate.

The basic idea is simple enough. People read magazines, it is reasoned, because of their creative content. The artist, then, whether he works with a typewriter, a camera or a box of paints, is the most important character in publishing, and should be the most richly rewarded.

Under the present scheme of things, he isn't. His work is bought cheap and sold dear by people whose contribution to the art of publishing is often restrictive and sometimes cheapening. Why not reverse the order? Why not let the artist own the medium through which his work is marketed and hire his own technicians? Why not publish a magazine cooperatively? Farmers, doctors, dentists, dairymen, and a dozen other professions have

CHECK THIS CREDIT

Dwight Babcock writes in to state that he was never assigned to the story, *The Man Who Dared*, at Columbia, on which he was erroneously credited in our last issue as a contributor to the dialogue. The error originated in the Academy Bulletin, which is correcting it, as we are happy to do here. Industry offices keeping files of writing credits published in these pages are requested to delete this credit attributed to Mr. Babcock in *The Screen Writer* for June.

established successful cooperatives. Why not writers?

This kind of thinking resulted, in December, 1945, in a group of forty New York writers putting up \$40,000 in cash to see if their colleagues wanted to try it, and incorporating the venture as Associated Magazine Contributors.

Since then, about \$160,000 in stock has been subscribed by the creative crafts, mainly on the East Coast, and an office has been opened at 68 West 45th St., New York City. Jerome Ellison, formerly Managing Editor of *Collier's*, has been employed as Editor-Publisher, and Walter Rose, formerly Assistant Publisher of the Breskin Publishing Company, has been hired as Business Manager. Plans are shaping up to publish early next year. The group has recently applied to California securities authorities for permission to offer the stock in that state. On their approval, participation of the California writing fraternity will be sought by direct mail.

Among those whose money and ability are backing the magazine are: John Hersey, Christopher LaFarge, Walter Lippman, Pearl Buck, Roger Butterfield, Margaret Culkin Banning, John Steinbeck, Raymond Swing, Clifton Fadiman, John Dos Passos, Russel Crouse, Howard Lindsay, Ogden Nash and Robert St.

John, on the writing side; George Biddle, Mary Petty, Leon Kroll, Reginald Marsh, William Gropper, Virgil Partch, Adolph Dehn, Anton Refregier, Alan Dunn, Ernest Fiene, Hirshfeld and Gardner Rea, among the artists; and Gjon Mili, Kosti Ruohomaa, Andre Kertesz, Robert Disraeli, Berenice Abbott, William Becker, Tommy Weber and Hermann Landshoff, photographers.

Nobody connected with the venture denies that it is a gamble, perhaps at long odds. Still, there seems no other way for creative talent to assure itself a proper return on its labor. Its supporters feel it is something that at least ought to be tried. If it is successful, we will have demonstrated that creative people in large groups can own and operate profitably the means by which their product is delivered to its market. The significance of this development to other fields of creative labor need hardly be underscored.

Actually, the odds are not too dismal. The choice of the pocket-size field for the first venture in cooperative publishing is dictated by several factors. First, it has tremendous commercial potentialities. The public has demonstrated its acceptance of the format by buying some 12 million copies of Reader's Digest and another 4 million copies of Coronet every month (prior to the recent magazine slump—ED.). It is willing to pay a quarter for these products, which is very near the top limit of what readers in the mass are willing to part with to get a magazine.

Because of its small size, manufacturing costs are lower than in any other field. This wide gap between cost and selling price makes it possible to publish without the editorial restrictions imposed by advertising and still do pretty well. If the new venture reached the circulation of even Coronet, for instance, it is estimated that it would earn its total invested capital, before taxes, once a month.

Besides, many of us feel certain ideological compulsions to put a strong

counter-irritant into this field. We feel — and there are mounting indications that we are not alone — that the reading public is sick of a diet of reaction and corn, and is about ready to spew it up.

We'd like to offer something more palatable, and have a hunch it would receive a ready welcome. We'd like to produce a magazine that will be progressive in the sense that it is looking for the truth and is not afraid to deal with it when it finds it; that is as visually handsome as the printing craft can make it; that is as adventurous in its visual effects as in its journalism; that can face the realities of the post-Hiroshima world without ducking issues, or losing its sense of humor.

The magazine will have one asset which will put it in a class by itself — willing creative talent in abundance. Its supporters already include such a battery of talent as no competing publisher could hope to assemble, and the venture is only half organized. It is willing talent — it will give the magazine of its best, if for no other reasons than selfish ones. Quality of content is the major factor in a magazine's success. The contributor-owners are mass-circulation professionals and know this. They are not likely to palm off bottom-drawer material at the risk of their own investment, nor will the small part of any writer's output that the magazine could consume interfere with members' other commitments. Indeed, the artistic and journalistic standard of the new magazine should set a fast pace.

Much, of course, depends upon competent management with freedom to exercise its competence. The Directors of the venture have examined the qualifications of Mr. Ellison and Mr. Ross — who will direct the editorial and business staffs — and found them worthy of confidence. If they make good, they can be retained; if not, they can be replaced.

The by-laws have been framed to prevent the magazine's losing its vitality by becoming a vested interest of aged and written-out writers, or from falling under the domination of wealth. Though profits will be shared according to the number

of shares owned, everybody gets only one vote, no matter how large his investment. Voting stock can be owned only by professional writers, artists and photographers, and cannot be transferred or inherited. Thus, though in the possible future a portion of the control may be in artistically non-productive hands, voting shares will always be available for up-and-coming contemporary talent.

Writers and artists have always main-

tained, usually with good cause, that their efforts are improperly rewarded. They have organized to win themselves a better shake. In the publishing field, Associated Magazine Contributors, Inc., carries this campaign to a showdown. If it is profitable, there is no place for the profits to go but to those who made it a creative success. It will be a yard-stick by which the rewards of authorship can be judged, and a pilot engine for cooperative creative enterprise.

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C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

WRITERS IN POLITICS

Frank Scully, Democratic nominee for the California Assembly from the 57th (Hollywood) District, addresses The Screen Writer as follows:

Tucked away in the News Notes (which I always read first) of the May issue was a quote from Emmet Lavery reprinted from a piece by Thornton Delehanty in the N.Y. Herald Trib. In it Lavery wrote:

"I happen to be president of the Screen Writers' Guild, but there is not going to be any support from that organization. I wouldn't permit it."

This referred to his candidacy for congress from the Beverly Hills district. I suppose if he wouldn't permit it for himself, he certainly wouldn't permit it for me. He needs to have Anna talk to him the way she talked to the King of Siam.

But if that's going too far afield let him take up the matter with Jack Shelley, president of the San Francisco Central Labor Council and currently nominee for lieutenant governor on the Democratic ticket. He also happens to head an organization in which every shade of political opinion is represented, but it did not stop him from going after the support of his own people. In fact he went after it so well he got nominated. Mr. Lavery didn't, more's the pity.

Personally I should like to see screen writers running for office, every shade

of political opinion, and all of them endorsed automatically by their guild. Either that or kicked out of their guild as unworthy of even membership.

It might be argued that Lavery didn't get guild endorsement and didn't get nominated, whereas I didn't get guild endorsement and did get nominated. It might even be argued that I even survived a C I O endorsement, being the only candidate in Hollywood to succeed. But I believe it would have been easier if I could have explained that as much as the voters believe in me, my own fellow-writers do not dislike me either. There's an amour propre involved and I certainly would like screen writers to say officially:

"We approve of a fellow-screen writer trying to fortify good government at any level, but of course since the ballot is secret that binds no member to vote for him."

You might ask the full membership some day how many of them voted at all on June 4 and if they didn't vote they betrayed millions who suffered or died that they might exercise this blessed privilege.

But in any event let them compare Lavery's vote to Shelley's as a practical proof of the support or non-support of fellow-craftsmen. I assure you that if elected and there is a conflict in the legislature between screen writers and carpenters, I would have to support the

carpenters for the simple reason that they supported me.

Upon which SWG President Emmet Lavery comments:

With all due respect to The Scully, who is a mighty collector of votes as well as a mighty wielder of words, I still think it the better part of political wisdom for the Screen Writers' Guild **not** to endorse members for public office, as a general rule.

Granting that there are moments when the right candidate and the right issue are the very real and the very immediate concern of all guilds and unions, this fact still remains: guilds and unions, like democracy itself, are places which unite men and women of different beliefs, not people of the same belief. The basic question always is: what will unite the largest number of members behind a given proposition?

It would seem, in all logic, that — no matter how desirable direct political action may be at times — it is more difficult to get general agreement on politics in a guild or union than it is on any other subject.

I agree this may not be so in other guilds or unions. I can only report on the situation as it seems to me in the Screen Writers' Guild at the present time.

Emmet Lavery's comments on the lessons learned from his recent unsuccessful campaign for the Congressional nomination from Beverly Hills will appear shortly in this magazine in an article titled You Never Can Tell.

ON ANTI-SEMITISM

Having himself observed instances of prejudice, Eliot Gibbons comments as follows on one phase of Leonard Spigelgass' widely read and quoted Kiska Journal in the June Screen Writer:

In this respect I would criticise the article . . . Spigelgass was fortunate in being able to obtain a remarkably representative cross-section of anti-Semitism at a time of stress when it was most clearly focused; and he is an intelligent person, well able to look out for his

feelings. What I, as a reader, wanted to know was how those people got that way. Had I been Leonard I would have gone to any length to find out, including whatever sacrifice of feeling was necessary. Such a report would have made his article truly valuable, because the roots of anti-Semitism, exposed, are the most obvious and powerful weapon for its destruction.

In the outfits I personally served with, anti-Semitism was rare, and the reasons given too trite to be worth recording here. However, to the best of my ability, I made sure that the reasons were given, and that those who gave them were thereby led, by their own words, to discover the inadequacy of their thoughts upon the subject. This method made only friends, and possibly planted some first germs of independent thought.

WRITERS' CREDITS

Jay E. Gordon, Visual Aids Coordinator, Headquarters Sixth Army, San Francisco, writes in to say:

I noted in several issues the reference to screen credits and I wonder just how strongly the screen writers are pressing this issue. I am in favor of credit for creative work, but have worked these past four years in obscurity due to the Army's apparently quite stern rule to give no credit to anyone. For example, my countless reams of creative writing have gone to press over the signature of the Adjutant General. My job entails the distribution and utilization of nearly 2000 separate motion pictures, not one of which exposes the name of the screen writer, director, musical director or actors. Now here is my point. These hundreds of motion pictures made by and for the Army and Navy, and hundreds of others produced by or for other government agencies, represent a sizeable portion of American motion picture production — and you gentlemen stay up nights figuring ways to improve the strategic and cultural position of the screen writer, but regardless of how many of you worked in anonymity, I fail to recall anyone's proposal of vigorous action to-

ward demanding screen credit in these government-made films.

Here is an example. This week Paramount is releasing for general distribution the Army's brilliant little film, *Don't Be A Sucker*, a strong plea for human tolerance. People who see it either consciously or unconsciously will miss the introductory titles which might have informed them that so-and-so (I don't even know myself!) wrote the screenplay, so-and-so directed it, and that Paul Lukas, Felix Bressart, Richard Lane and others are the actors. It is too bad the Army has such a rule, for without screen credits, this excellent film is credited merely to "the Army" or perhaps to Paramount, and the individuals responsible for its artistry are denied recognition.

The Constitution insures the rights of creative artists, but the Army and other governmental agencies, closest to the Constitution in social structure, deny those rights. Once when I asked for information relative to persons responsible for the production of the *Why We Fight* series, the Army would not tell me even that Frank Capra had anything to do with the documentary masterpieces.

If you feel the way I do about this, why not start campaigning for recognition of creative artists, screen writers in particular, of course, in government-made motion pictures? The State Department's Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs is launching a sizeable motion picture production program. Will this office credit the screen writers of their films which go out to all the world?

Mr. Gordon's suggestion will be given full consideration, and it is a good one. For his information, *Don't Be A Sucker* was written by Richard Collins and produced by Edmund G. North, as project-officer. Full credits on this, as on other Army shorts, are not available.

Reviews in Providence

Bradford F. Swan, Theater Editor of The Providence (R. I.) Journal and Evening Bulletin, sends in a clipping of one of his film reviews, adding:

Since one of your favorite bellyaches is that screen writers never get credit, I am enclosing a review which I wrote recently. I, for one, have never hesitated to give the writer credit if I thought he was the one who deserved it; and, conversely, I've never hesitated to administer spanking for badly written screenplays.

I must add that I enjoy your magazine very much. Read it from cover to cover every month. Some one of my predatory colleagues pinched my carefully hoarded file of the first seven numbers, however. If there's any chance of replacing them, I'll guarantee to keep them under lock and key in the future.

We were mightily pleased by Mr. Swan's kind words, and flattered by the predatory interest of his colleagues (those issues still available have been furnished him — Ed.). The review enclosed was one of *Deadline At Dawn*, with fulsome praise for Clifford Odets' screenplay — which reminded us of Alan Grey Branigan's comment in our March issue on names such as Odets', "known from other fields." A second review by Mr. Swan, on the same page, mentioned the director and cast of *Heartbeat*, but made no mention of the writers. Perhaps, in light of Mr. Swan's letter, this was a criticism in itself.

WHO WORKS FOR NOTHING?

From Frank Scully, again, comes this comment on an article in our last issue:

Martin Field asks a good question in his piece of shopwriting called *Who Works For Nothing?* but the Editorial Note leaves me wondering if the answer isn't gratuitous too.

The spirit of the Guild seems to be one-sided in that only the writer gets rebuked for violating Guild writing rules in his eagerness to make a buck.

Isn't it about time the Guild made producers equally responsible for violations of the code of working rules? A strict rule that **no producer** can talk to a writer about a project without laying

something on the line is in order. Boards of directors, in their advisory capacity, used to find gold pieces under their luncheon plates. Why not a Louis (after the producer of the same name) for the writer who is invited to discuss an idea with a film company executive?

I can think of no better way to get respect for the writer's opinion and general sagacity than the necessity of paying on the nose for brain-work. This business of picking writers' brains for the price of a two-buck lunch is indicative of an industry attitude toward the writer. It

weakens the position of the entire Guild as an organization. Producers, not writers, should be told to stop it. Try rectifying the abuse from that angle. It's the proper angle.

Rumor has it that Frank put this into effect on his own, by demanding payment from a producer who wanted him to read a script and see whether he felt he could do anything with it. It was impossible to check the story before going to press, but Frank, it is reported, got paid for reading and giving his reaction!

★ ★ ★

N E W S N O T E S

★ American Contemporary Gallery in Hollywood has inaugurated a six-week program, on Thursday and Friday nights, titled *A Short Survey of the Film In America*. The series, covering the period from 1895 to 1930, includes: July 11-12, *The Development of Narrative: The Execution of Mary Queen of Scots* (1895), *Wash Day Troubles* (1896), *A Trip to the Moon* (Méliès, 1902), *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), *Rescued by Rover* (1905), *Possibility of a War in the Air* (1910), *Queen Elizabeth* (Sarah Bernhardt, 1912); July 18-19, *The Rise of the American Film: A Corner in Wheat* (Griffith, 1909), *The New York Hat* (Griffith, 1912), *A Fool There Was* (1914); July 25-26, *The Basis of Modern Technique: Intolerance* (Griffith, 1916); Aug. 1-2, *The Basis of Modern Technique (cont.): Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1903), *Tol'able David* (1921); Aug. 8-9, *The German Influence: Hands* (1928), *Sunrise* (1927); Aug. 15-16, *The Talkies: Two scenes from The Jazz Singer* (1927), *Newsreel* (George Bernard Shaw, 1927), *Steamboat Willie* (Disney, 1928), *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930).

★ New two-month series of *Highlights of the Documentary Film* begins July 18

at the New York Museum of Modern Art, after a three-day shutdown of the Museum. Series will include several films not shown before at the Museum, such as *What's Happened to Sugar?*, *When We Build Again* (British), and *Earth in Song* (Czechoslovak). Daily schedules were unfortunately not received in time for inclusion in this issue . . . On Sept. 16, the Museum will start a series on *The Art of the Motion Picture* . . . Incidentally, the six-month documentary series just completed by the Museum shows a gain of 20,000 spectators (or 22½%) over the series of narrative films shown in the same period last year . . . Iris Barry, curator of the Museum's Film Library, has gone to Paris to represent the U. S. at the first Conference of the International Federation of Film Archives, to be held at the Cinémathèque française, with representatives of England, France, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Czechoslovakia and the USSR.

★ San Francisco Council for Civic Unity, observing the first anniversary of the San Francisco Conference, July 2, stressed the role of motion pictures in strengthening unity among people of all origins and creeds and among nations,

with the showing of San Francisco—1945, Hymn to the Nations, and Don't Be a Sucker. Bartley Crum and William Winter were the main speakers.

★ Last month's French Film Festival at the Studio Theatre met with such success that the original list of eight revivals was enlarged to include *Hôtel du Nord*, *The Pasha's Wives*, *The Puritan* and *Pique-Dame*.

★ Actors' Lab has extended the run of Clifford Odets' *Awake and Sing* through Sunday July 28. The production, directed by J. Edward Bromberg, with cast including John Garfield and most of the N. Y. creators of the roles, has garnered critical raves from the local press. . . . Next Lab production will be Arthur Laurent's *Home of the Brave*, directed by Phil Brown, opening Aug. 13 for 4-week run.

★ Pasadena Playhouse is running its midsummer festival of plays by Clyde Fitch. *Her Own Way* was the first; then *Barbara Frietchie*; *The Climbers*; and *Girls*, during the week of July 16-21. Three other Fitch plays will be presented in succeeding weeks, next being *The Girl With the Green Eyes*.

★ RADIO — Two outstanding public service programs worth noting are Arnold Marquis' *The Fifth Horseman*, on "the destructive power of the atom bomb and the social and political implications of atomic energy," heard over NBC, Thursdays at 6:30-7:00 PM PST (series began July 4 and runs through Aug. 22); and Chet Huntley's CBS-KNX broadcast each Saturday at 5:30-5:45 PM PST, called *Inventory '46*, presenting the programs and accomplishments of the health and welfare services of the Welfare Federation (Community Chest and Welfare Council).

★ Irwin Shaw, the distinguished playwright and short story writer, has been awarded a \$1,000 prize by the American Academy of Arts & Letters, and a citation for his creative contribution to American literature.

★ Harry J. Essex has a short story published in the current (July) issue of *Woman's Day*, titled *The First Table*.

★ A forthcoming issue of *Collier's* is slated to carry a short story by Abraham L. Polonsky, entitled *A Little Fire*. This is an atomic bomb story, originally developed for the radio series planned by the Hollywood Writers' Mobilization.

★ Ted B. Sills has just finished writing, adapting and directing a new series of children's albums, *The Playhouse Series*, for Bel-Tone Record Corp. Sills is to do ten more albums for the same outfit before 1947.

★ Emmet Lavery's *A Time For Action*, in *The Screen Writer* for May, was reported and condensed by Associated Press in its worldwide feature service, going to hundreds of publications the world over.

★ Simple facts on the similarity between a passage of Wolfe Kaufman's *I Hate Blondes* and a novel of Eric Ambler's were that there was indeed a photographic resemblance of a few early pages of Kaufman's murder mystery, but the major part of the story, theme, characters and situations were entirely different. Despite an early successful sale, book was withdrawn because of the coincidence of writing, and publishers, Simon & Schuster, have signed Kaufman for another novel, *Redheads Are Murder*. Which should put to rest the insinuations of Wolfe's well-meaning "friends" who couldn't help speculating publicly about repercussions of what Earl Wilson, N. Y. *Variety*, and other columnists and publications correctly and simply ascribed to a photographic memory. . . . Other news from Kaufman front, incidentally, is that his forthright article on the merits (and mostly demerits) of both critics and screen writers, in *The Screen Writer* for May, cost him one of his assignments as a critic. Editors, it seems, as well as writers and critics, are sensitive about what is said about them! . . .

★ Leonard Spigelgass, whose *Kiska* Journal appeared in our last issue, has

just returned from a three-week trip to New York, where he conferred with Arthur Mayer and others on the Educational Film Project, sponsored by the Johnston Organization, the American Council on Education and a committee of textbook publishers. The project is financed by a \$100,000 grant from the Producers' Association, and intends to produce model documentary and educational pictures, which will not necessarily be assigned to Hollywood studios for production, but to whatever group may appear best suited to shoot them. Particularly responsible for this project, within the producers' group, are N. Peter Rathvon of RKO, J. Robert Rubin of MGM, and Joe Hazen of Hal Wallis Productions. Film-makers will watch with extreme interest this project which promises, if carried out as planned, to represent a real advance in over-all techniques of documentary and educational film production.

SWG members are urged to bring to the attention of The Screen Writer production of their plays, publication of their novels and stories, or other non-motion picture literary activities, for listing in these News Notes.

★ Elliott Roosevelt, brother of contributor James, brings out a book about their late father, *As He Saw It*, due Oct. 1 under the imprint of Duell, Sloan & Pearce . . . Same publishers announce for this month Howard Fast's *The American* (Literary Guild selection for August). *The American* is a story of Illinois Governor John Peter Altgeld. Publishers claim a book-club record for Fast, whose *Patrick Henry* and the *Frigate's Keel* was a Book Find Club selection; *Freedom Road*, Literary Guild bonus book and Labor Book Club selection; *Citizen Tom Paine*, Literary Guild dividend, *Book Find and Read Book Club* selection; *Last Frontier*, Readers' Club; and *The Unvanquished*, Book League of America. Only two of his eight major books have failed to go out through any club. . . Duell, Sloan also announce, for July, *Murder Cavalcade*, first of their annual anthologies

of crime, in which, among others, SWG member Craig Rice is represented.

★ Currently leading the country's fiction best-seller lists is Taylor Caldwell's *This Side of Innocence*, which Story Productions is bringing to the screen with special exploitation of the story property as the real star attraction (at least prior to announcement of actors). New method is proving highly successful in book sales and reader interest, and will be watched with interest by writers as a possible indication of new importance to be given literary properties in film buildup. . . . Also near the top of the best-seller lists is Erich-Maria Remarque's *Arch of Triumph*, now being filmed.

★ Fourth issue of *The Hollywood Quarterly*, due out end of this month, includes script of animated cartoon, *The Brotherhood of Man*, by Ring Lardner, Jr., and John Hubley, based on *Races of Mankind*, by Drs. Ruth Benedict and Gene Weltfish. Chuck Jones writes on music in animated cartoons, and Hubley and Zachary Schwartz contribute an article on *The Evolution of the Cartoon*, while Kenneth Macgowan turns in *Make Mine Disney*. Other articles include *A Short Inquiry into a Form of Popular Poetry*, by Everett Carter; *The Puppet and the Muppet*, Sondra Gorney; *Photography in Documentary Films*, Willard Van Dyke; *Report to the Stockholders*, Alex Greenberg and Malvin Wald; *Law, Pressure and Public Opinion*, Gilbert Seldes; and *The Film as a Weapon*, Harold J. Salemson. Film, book and radio reviews, and a bibliography of war pictures, feature films, radio and music complete the issue. Review of special importance is Paul Stewart's analysis of the Federal Communications Commission's blue book on the public service responsibilities of radio broadcast licensees.

★ Worth noting: Sali Liebermann's article *Good Films Are Rare*, which appeared in the March issue of *The Christian Register* (Unitarian). Liebermann was production manager on the Swiss film *The Last Chance* and assistant art director on *Marie-Louise*, and he tells of production

conditions that prevailed on these two outstanding films. He appraises *The Last Chance*, in conclusion: "The message of co-operation between nationalities and peoples, illustrated by the solidarity among the refugees, is one that certainly ought to be heard in the era of atom-bomb diplomacy." . . . Same magazine for June publishes a statement of faith by Margo, titled *Whether We Like It Or Not*: "Whether you make your living as a carpenter, a tailor, a teacher, a judge, an artist or a baker is secondary. The first and most important thing is your duty as a citizen. Let us never again forget that, for if we do millions of people have died in vain and we live in vain." . . . Announced for fall by *The Christian Register* is a series on *Unfinished Business in the Arts*, to which Genevieve Taggard, Odell Shepard, Olivia de Havilland, Otto Matthiesson, and others, have been asked to contribute.

★ An outstanding job of labor public relations, and a remarkable presentation in pamphlet form is *Who Is This Man?*, the exposition of the case for higher wages for Local 683, IATSE, Laboratory Technicians' Union. Design layout is credited to Ray Sherwin, but the people who wrote the copy and built the sequence of this unusual plea for fair treatment are not mentioned. A model job for any labor organization to emulate.

★ New term at People's Educational Center, started July 8, includes following writing courses, mostly by SWG members: Screenwriting I, Howard Dimsdale, Mondays 8:30 PM; Screenwriting II, Val Burton, Mondays 7:00 PM; Screenwriting III, Hal Smith, Tuesdays 7:00 PM; Modern Novel, Guy Endore and John Sanford, Mondays 8:30 PM; Radiowriting, Russell Hughes, Tuesdays 7:00 PM; Radiowriting Workshop, Frederick Jackson Stanley, Thursdays 7:00 PM; Short Story, Wilma Shore, Tuesdays 8:30 PM; Modern Playwriting, Charles B. Millholland, Fridays 7:00 PM; Motion Picture Direction, Frank Tuttle (with Herbert Biberman, Vincent Sherman, Irving Pichel, Kenneth

Macgowan, Hugo Friedhofer and others, guest lecturers), Thursdays 8:30 PM; Basic Journalism, Charles Ellis, Mondays 8:30 PM. Other classes of special interest: Political Organization, Bernard Lusher, with guest lecturers, Fridays 8:30 PM; Your Trade Union and You; History of American Labor Movement; Labor Research and Statistics; American History (Introduction); Music and the Listener; Folk Music and the People. . . PEC calls special attention to lecture it is holding Thursday July 25 at Screen Cartoonists' Hall: Helmer Bergman, co-chairman of CSU lot stewards' committee, will speak on *The History of the Hollywood Trade Union Movement*, with Richard Collins and Maurice Howard completing the panel. Admission 25c, free to students enrolled in current PEC courses.

★ FOREIGN VISITORS — On June 18, Hollywood Writers' Mobilization held a seminar led by Maria Rosa Oliver, editor of the Buenos Aires magazine *Sur*. Many SWG members and representatives of other talent groups questioned her about status of U. S. films in Argentina, position of writers there, and degree of political freedom under Peron régime. Seminar was held at home of Kenneth Macgowan. . . On July 9, same organization held reception, at Beverly Wilshire Hotel, for Hungarian author-journalist Geza Penzes. He discussed new government in Hungary, its relation to USSR and the Western world, and stressed that main help Americans could give the democratic régime was to spread correct information about it and break down the myth of the "iron curtain." Among first U. S. films successfully released in Hungary since liberation, Penzes cited *The Sullivans*, *30 Seconds Over Tokyo* and *Tales of Manhattan*. . .

★ FOREIGN OUTLETS — New sales representatives for *The Screen Writer* abroad include Carter's Bookshop, 51 Willesden Lane, London N. W. 6, England; the literature kiosk of Unity Theatre, London; and Eason & Son, Ltd., 79-82 Middle Abbey St., P. O. Box 42, Dublin, Eire.

★ The International Film Festival of Cannes, France, mentioned by Charles A. Page in his article, A Guilds Film Library, as originally scheduled for 1939 but postponed due to the war, will take place at Cannes, Sept. 20-Oct. 5. Invitations have gone out to leading film personalities of all the major producing countries, and France, England, Russia, the U. S., and

others, have all promised to submit their finest and most recent film achievements, all of which will be exhibited in their original versions, without sub-titles. Full schedules of showings, as well as a list of the projected awards, which cover all fields of film creation, with special emphasis on writing and directing, will be announced in our next issues.

the SCREEN WRITER

" . . . the one house organ in the country with enthusiastic readers outside the membership . . . the only Hollywood magazine with a sense of humor."

— Virginia Wright, L. A. Daily News.

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A LISTING OF SCREEN WRITERS' CREDITS
EARNED ON FEATURE PRODUCTIONS
OF CURRENT AND RECENT RELEASE

CREDITS

MAY 10, 1946 TO JUNE 8, 1946

A

GERALD D. ADAMS

Sole Original Story THE INVISIBLE IN-FORMER, REP

B

SY BARTLETT

Joint Original Screenplay (with John Monks, Jr.) 13 RUE MADELEINE, FOX

DOROTHY BENNETT

Additional Dialogue DO YOU LOVE ME, FOX

LEIGH BRACKETT

Sole Screenplay CRIME DOCTOR'S MAN HUNT, COL

RICHARD BROOKS

Sole Screenplay SWELL GUY, UNI

ADELE BUFFINGTON

Sole Original Screenplay WILD BEAUTY, UNI

C

FRANK CAVETT

Joint Original Story (with Dorothy Parker) SMASH-UP, UNI

RAYMOND CHANDLER

Novel Basis LADY IN THE LAKE, MGM

ROY CHANSLOR

Sole Story and Screenplay THE MICHIGAN KID, UNI

OLIVE COOPER

Sole Original Screenplay SIOUX CITY SUE, REP

D

KAREN DE WOLF

Sole Story IT'S GREAT TO BE YOUNG, COL

HOWARD DIMSDALE

Sole Original Story UNCLE ANDY HARDY, MGM

F

STEVE FISHER

Sole Screenplay LADY IN THE LAKE, MGM

G

HARVEY GATES

Sole Screenplay LAST FRONTIER UPRISING, REP

Joint Screenplay (with Caryl Coleman) DON'T GAMBLE WITH STRANGERS, MONO

GERALD GERAGHTY

Sole Original Screenplay HOME IN OKLAHOMA, REP

BERT GRANET

Sole Original Story DO YOU LOVE ME, FOX

EVE GREENE

Joint Screenplay (with Richard Macaulay) DEADLIER THAN THE MALE, RKO

JAMES GUNN

Novel Basis DEADLIER THAN THE MALE, RKO

H

SAM HELLMAN

Joint Screenplay (with Margaret Buell Wilder) PIRATES OF MONTEREY, UNI

JACK HENLEY

Sole Screenplay IT'S GREAT TO BE YOUNG, COL

PAUL HUSTON

Joint Original Screenplay (with Joseph Poland and Barry Shipman) THE MYSTERIOUS MR. M, UNI

K

ALLEN KENWARD

Joint Original Story (with Ralph Wheelwright) TWO SMART PEOPLE, MGM

L

JONATHAN LATIMER

Sole Screenplay NOCTURNE, RKO

JOHN HOWARD LAWSON

Sole Screenplay SMASH-UP, UNI

COL — Columbia Pictures Corporation; FOX — Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation; MGM — Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios; MONO — Monogram Pictures Corporation; PAR — Paramount Pictures, Inc.; PRC — Producers Releasing Corporation of America; REP — Republic Productions, Inc.; RKO — RKO Radio Studios, Inc.; UA — United Artists Corporation; UNI — Universal Pictures Company, Inc.; UWP — United World Pictures; WB — Warner Brothers Studios.

ERNA LAZARUS

Joint Original Screenplay (with David Mathews) OH SAY CAN YOU SING, UNI

HELEN LOGAN

Joint Screenplay (with Robert Ellis) DO YOU LOVE ME, FOX

EDWARD T. LOWE

Joint Original Story (with Bradford Ropes) PIRATES OF MONTEREY, UNI

WILLIAM LUDWIG

Joint Screenplay (with Harry Ruskin) UNCLE ANDY HARDY, MGM

M**RICHARD MACAULAY**

Joint Screenplay (with Eve Greene) DEADLIER THAN THE MALE, RKO

JOEL MALONE

Joint Additional Dialogue (with Jerry Warner) OH SAY CAN YOU SING, UNI

DAVID MATHEWS

Joint Original Screenplay (with Erna Lazarus) OH SAY CAN YOU SING, UNI

HERBERT MEADOW

Sole Screenplay THE STRANGE WOMAN, UA (Mars Film)

JOHN MONKS, JR.

Joint Screenplay (with Sy Bartlett) 13 RUE MADELEINE, FOX

BYRON MORGAN

Joint Original Screenplay (with William A. Wellman) GALLANT JOURNEY, COL

O**JEROME ODLUM**

Sole Original Story LAST FRONTIER UP-RISING, REP

P**JOSEPH POLAND**

Joint Original Screenplay (with Paul Huston and Barry Shipman) THE MYSTERIOUS MR. M, UNI

ROBERT PRESNELL, SR.

Additional Dialogue THE MICHIGAN KID, UNI

R**BRADFORD ROPES**

Joint Original Story (with Edward T. Lowe) PIRATES OF MONTEREY, UNI

HARRY RUSKIN

Joint Screenplay (with William Ludwig) UNCLE ANDY HARDY, MGM

S**BARRY SHIPMAN**

Joint Original Screenplay (with Joseph Poland and Paul Huston) THE MYSTERIOUS MR. M, UNI

EARLE SNELL

Sole Original Screenplay VIGILANTES OF BOOMTOWN, REP

T**ERIC TAYLOR**

Sole Story CRIME DOCTOR'S MAN HUNT, COL

CATHERINE TURNERY

Sole Screenplay CRY WOLF, WB

W**JERRY WARNER**

Joint Additional Dialogue (with Joel Malone) OH SAY CAN YOU SING, UNI

RALPH WHEELWRIGHT

Joint Original Story (with Allen Kenward) TWO SMART PEOPLE, MGM

LIONEL WIGGAM

Additional Dialogue SMASH-UP, UNI

AUBREY WISBERG

Sole Original Screenplay RENDEZVOUS 24, FOX (Sol M. Wurtzel)

MARGARET BUELL WILDER

Joint Screenplay (with Sam Hellman) PIRATES OF MONTEREY, UNI

SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD STUDIO CHAIRMEN

COLUMBIA — Melvin Levy; Ted Thomas, alternate.

M-G-M — Isobel Lennart; Sonya Levien, Marion Parsonnet, Osso Van Eyss, Polly James, William Ludwig, stewards; Robert Andrews, Paul Wellman, Arch Whitehouse, alternates.

PARAMOUNT — Abe Polonsky; Robert Lees, alternate.

R-K-O — Arthur Ross; Bess Taffel, alternate.

REPUBLIC — John Butler; Betty Burbridge, alternate.

20th CENTURY FOX — Valentine Davies; Wanda Tuchock, alternate.

UNIVERSAL — Jerry Warner.

WARNER BROS. — Randal MacDougall.

Hollywood Quarterly

The HOLLYWOOD QUARTERLY gives mature consideration to the techniques and subject matter of motion pictures and radio, and to their social implications. It is concerned with the work of writers, musicians, producers, directors, actors, and technicians.

Articles in the July, 1946, and subsequent issues:

- Brotherhood of Man: *a Script*
RING LARDNER, JR., and JOHN HUBLEY
A Short Inquiry into a Form of Popular Poetry (*song lyrics*) . . .
EVERETT CARTER
A New Way of Looking at Things (*television*) . . . CARL BEIER
Studio Architecture WILLIAM PEREIRA
Evolution of the Cartoon
JOHN HUBLEY and ZACHARY SCHWARTZ
Music and the Animated Cartoon CHUCK JONES
The Puppet and the Moppet SONDR A K. GORNEY
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the **SCREEN WRITER**

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AUGUST 1946

T H E C E L L U L O I D N O O S E

BUDD SCHULBERG

NOVEMBER 21, 1945, is a day none of us should forget. That is the day that Nazism went on trial before the first International Military Tribunal ever to sit in judgment on the crime of conspiring to wage war against peaceful nations.

As Justice Robert H. Jackson rose to present the case of the United States against the twenty-one top-flight Nazis sitting in the box and the millions of lesser Nazis implicated in the crimes of the SS, the SA, and the General Staff, every one of us on Jackson's staff who had helped even in a small way to make possible this long-awaited event felt a sense of pride, an intimate association with history that was payment in full for

BUDD SCHULBERG, author of *What Makes Sammy Run*, was recently separated from the Armed Forces and has settled in Pennsylvania, where he is at work on a new novel.

all the disappointments, all the snafus, redtape and organizational cul-de-sac that were inevitable in setting up almost over night an international system of social and military justice.

And when Jackson, in that inspiring first-salvo, promised the defendants that he would prove his case not only with documents and witnesses but with the aid of motion pictures that would convict the Nazi leaders out of their own mouths, all of us who had concentrated on this phase of Operation Justice felt far more compensated than if we had just heard that we had all won Academy Awards and had our salaries doubled.

For behind this reference of Jackson's lay an often-frustrating and always eye-straining quest that had led us through six hectic months, eight countries and ten million feet of film. It had begun early in June in General Donovan's Washington office, when the OSS chief had called representatives of a dozen different branches of his organization together to find out what each could contribute to the then embryonic war crimes project. As representative of Capt. John Ford's Photographic Branch, I suggested that we could screen and break-down all film on the Nazi period already collected and organize a search through Europe for secret and previously-undiscovered Nazi films. "Good," said General Donovan, who always expects miracles and sometimes surprises himself by getting them. "How soon can you have something ready?"

Forty-eight hours later I was in New York City, running through the impressive stock library of Fox Movietone News with one of our cutters, Joe Zigman, a hulking Brooklyn boy who looked incongruous in his tight-fitting sailor suit, and Dr. Karl Jacoby, our technical expert, a public prosecutor in Berlin before 1933 who had somehow maneuvered his way out of Germany in the summer of 1941. Jacoby, enthusiastic and thorough if somewhat eccentric, would grow so excited when recognizing an early and incriminating shot of Goering or Hess that he would grab the lethargic but ever-patient Joe around the neck, shouting, "Stop! Stop! There he is!," often grabbing the controls of the Moviola himself, inevitably knotting the film and causing endless delay.

In spite of these minor disturbances, we managed to screen approximately 20,000 feet a day, stopping, rerunning and translating until at the end of two weeks we had boiled down several hundred thousand feet to

65,000, which we analyzed and catalogued. Much of this was later discarded as we came across even more incriminating material, but it was from this initial screening that we found such items as Goering's speech as Minister of Interior for Prussia, before the Nazis' ascent to power, threatening to "wipe Germany clean with an iron brush of every kind of opposition," Goebbels' exhortation to the SA on the morning of the first organized anti-Semitic riot, and the first of the great-book burnings.

It was the cavalier treatment of this latter event by the Hearst Metrotone News, incidentally, that crystallized for me the spiritual bankruptcy of our newsreels during this period. The book-burning, for instance, which can truly be said to have set the world on fire, is accompanied by carefree "There'll Be A Hot Time In The Old Time Tonight" music with a racy, happy-go-lucky narration by Lowell Thomas that begins, "Well, looks like these young Heidelberg students are having a hot time for themselves tonight. . . .," and continues in this tone, a Simple Simon describing world tragedy in the jocular terms of an apple-ducking contest. Another release, depicting one of the last great Nazi rallies before Hitler came to power, is described in heavy-handed dialect, in the imitable manner of Lew Lehr.

But our job wasn't to analyze and indict our own newsreel companies, tempting as that project seemed. The Fox Movietone library had brought us to the Fall of 1939 when Goebbels had moved in on all the foreign newsreel companies in Germany. But fortunately OSS, through connections in Switzerland, Portugal, Spain and other neutral countries, had been receiving the official German newsreel, Wochenschau, regularly. Sometimes, during the war, these films arrived so promptly that we were able to see them eight days after they were produced in Berlin.

From approximately 500,000 feet of this illicitly obtained material, we were able to document Nazi aggression from the first strike across the Polish frontier (beautifully covered by Wochenschau cameramen with closeups of Wehrmacht soldiers ripping the Polish insignia off the border gates) until the August 1, 1944 edition, in which Major Rehmer, Hitler Jugend alumnus credited with putting down the July 20 Putsch, screams at his company of Wehrmacht Honor Guards that they are not merely soldiers but **political** soldiers who must take their orders directly from Der Fuehrer and his deputies, thereby indicating the split beginning

to separate some of the German High Command from their Nazi partners.

We supplemented this newsreel material with sequences from Nazi documentary films, some of which had already been analyzed by the OSS Film Library group, while others were obtained from the Museum of Modern Art and the Alien Property Custodian, who had confiscated Nazi propaganda films showing in Yorkville and other German communities at the outbreak of the war. One of the most edifying of these was the 11-reel Leni Riefenstahl epic, *The Triumph of the Will*, documenting the 1934 Party Congress at Nuremberg, which contains such jewels as Schacht's appearance in the front row with a Party emblem in his button-hole, the German High Command reviewing SS, SA and Flieger Korps detachments, thereby establishing the military character of these allegedly unmilitarized organizations, and Minister of Justice Hans Frank's somewhat novel interpretation of justice, "There is no other justice but the will of Adolf Hitler." Other documentaries in which we were able to find incriminating material were *Victory in the West*, *Drive Through Poland*, which ends with Goering's threat to level London as he has Warsaw, and *Argentina*, a 12-reel hymn of praise for the growth and strength of the Nazi movement in that hospitable climate.

But five weeks were already gone and we had barely two months (if the trial was to open on September 15, as originally planned) to canvass all Europe for film which then had to be analyzed and annotated in terms of an indictment which had not been written and for which a legal staff was only then being assembled. Com. Ray Kellogg, of the Twentieth Century-Fox Special Effects Dept., then acting chief of our outfit in Ford's absence, made a two-week survey of the European job which uncovered so many sources of film that we would have needed every GI on the continent if we were to be saved from smothering in celluloid.

At Bayreuth alone Kellogg had run across the entire Wehrmacht still library, consisting of 12 million stills which he had sent back to our London office for us to work away at in our spare time, still pictures being merely a subsidiary to our main assignment. In all fairness to Ray, however, if he was instrumental in getting us on the hook he was also instrumental in getting us off, by showing up in Berlin three weeks before the last of our deadlines and throwing himself into a routine of twenty

(and sometimes twenty-four) hour days that had us all hanging on the ropes.

But early in July, as we made plans for our own little D-Day, our invasion force consisted of myself, Lt. Com. Jack Munroe, Svengali-like ex-Fox Movietone front-man, who wore a watch inscribed "to Stinky from Doris" (Duke), Ensign John Bott, a happy-go-lucky Connecticut lad not yet recovered from a demoralizing case of CBI, Dr. Jacoby, Maga Policek, an Austrian refugee who spoke a handful of languages, Susan Shestopel, a pint-sized Russian dynamo who had worked for the Soviet newsreel service in Moscow, cutters Joe Zigman, CPO's Bob Parrish and Bob Webb, Sgt. Smith, a speed-writing expert, Sgt. Robert Hiden, a civilian interior decorator metamorphosed through the exigencies of war into an excellent cross-filer, and my brother Stuart Schulberg, a working newspaperman then serving the Marine Corps as a staff sergeant. There were also two Marine majors whose lack of knowledge of Nazi history and motion picture technique was supposed to have been compensated for by FBI and counter-intelligence experience. They had preceded us to Europe by several weeks and upon our arrival reported triumphantly the discovery of an important cache of secret film they had uncovered by taking a Munich exhibitor of Nazi inclination out on a back road and threatening "to do to him what the SS had done to their victims" unless he told them where secret Nazi film was hidden. The exhibitor, pleading for his life, directed them to an abandoned church outside of Munich. Sgt. Schulberg, leading a field team that tracked down this and other of the majors' leads, succeeded in finding the abandoned church, and indeed it had been turned into an improvised film storehouse. But what the well-meaning officers had neglected to learn was that the "secret" film consisted of nothing but dupe-negative stock!

While Ensign Bott, my brother and a team of German-refugee translators drafted from Military Intelligence set up headquarters at Wiesbaden and proceeded to screen those 12 million Wehrmacht stills as well as collect new material in southern Germany, we decided to concentrate on the Berlin area, where the largest film deposits were supposed to be hidden. For this work we added to our staff an Alsatian film editor formerly on Goebbels' staff, who had become through the ironies of war a French national and who was anxious to bird-dog our expedition in

order to prove himself as good a Frenchman as he had recently been a German. According to this informant, Walter Rode, the largest secret vault of the German Film Archive was in the shaft of a granite quarry just outside the village of Reudersdorf, about 30 miles east of Berlin, in the Soviet zone.

After negotiating with the Soviet colonel commanding that area, we finally obtained permission to enter Reudersdorf, accompanied by a Red Army officer, Major Viergang, a smartly-uniformed, dashing fellow with thin waxed moustaches who looked more like a character out of War and Peace than a contemporary. With Major Viergang, we drove further into Soviet-occupied Germany, so we were told, than any Americans had been allowed to penetrate. To reach the granite quarry outside the village, we had to walk through a tunnel several hundred yards long, which had been used as an underground vault for Nazi valuables. When we came out into the light again, we were confronted by one of the most amazing sights I have ever seen — burned film and charred film cans stretching for acres in every direction. The shaft into the mountainside, which Rode has described to us so accurately, extending into the granite quarry some two hundred feet, was piled six feet high with more burned film. Burrowing down to the bottom we found some footage only partially destroyed that clearly indicated Nazi coverage of concentration camps, which Rode himself had claimed to have seen.

The fire at Reudersdorf, consuming at least one million feet of film, and some estimates run much higher, undoubtedly wiped out a film record of the Nazi regime as seen from the inside that would have been of permanent historical importance. According to Germans in the vicinity, the fire had taken place only a short time before our arrival. The Germans, including the Burgomeister, were unanimous in pinning the blame on drunken Red Army soldiers who, we were told, staggered into the Archive one night and started the conflagration with torches. The resulting explosion was said to have been so powerful that several cans of film were blown all the way into the village.

Major Viergang scoffed at the Germans' story. The film had obviously been sealed up in the mountainside, he said. It was so expertly hidden that only someone who had known in advance exactly where it was could have located it. Viergang also expressed considerable doubt as

to whether such an explosion could have been started accidentally by torches. It would have required demolitions, he pointed out, to open the sealed shaft.

It became more obvious in ensuing weeks that the Nazis had destroyed their most incriminating films through a carefully premeditated plan. On another tip from Rode, we found a second film archive site in a salt mine at Graslleben, near the Belsen concentration camp. But here also the film was burned. According to the official report of the fire, it had been started by German workmen who accidentally kicked over oil lamps while helping British soldiers remove the film from the vault. We also searched the Glockenspiel of the Olympic Stadium, and there again it was the same story. With the opening of the trial less than a month away, it looked as if our showing would be limited to the film we had assembled in Washington before we left, plus a handful of stills which my brother and his MIS team had patiently gleaned from those 12 million.

And then came the body blow — a call from Com. Donovan, our chief at Nuremberg, whose job it was to dovetail our films with the indictment, who dropped in our lap the tribunal's decision that none of the film we had brought with us from the States would be acceptable because only film printed directly from the original German negative could be introduced as evidence. It would be too easy for the defense counsel to claim that German material used in American newsreels had been doctored, and even though this had not been the case, the tribunal feared that too much time would be consumed in proving the films' authenticity.

We felt like the home team going into the ninth inning on the short end of a 30-0 score. And then, for the first time, things began to break our way. The opening of the Trial, which had been postponed from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, was postponed again, and then once more, not actually beginning until the 20th of November, giving us ten additional weeks. In Berlin, about the same time, through the assistance of an OSS operative, we located in the basement of a small film library the entire film-recorded proceedings of the Nazi trial of the July 20 plotters, running to 68 reels. This film, which we cut to 5 reels for presentation to the prosecution staff, is an unforgettably terrifying record of what justice

meant to the Nazi mind. For at least 67 of these 68 reels, the sound track consists of nothing but the fanatical calumnies of Judge Freisler. When Count Schwerin, for instance, asked why he became a party to the plot, answers, "Because of the murders I saw committed in Poland," Freisler interrupts him with a shriek, "Murders! Why, you low swine-dog, you," and launches into an hysterical tirade that runs for a thousand feet.

Former Field Marshal Von Witzleben is led before the court with pants ludicrously too wide around the waist, and no belt, so that each time he attempts to raise his hands to make a point his pants slip down. In one of the most interesting episodes, a Catholic priest, Father Wehrle, is brought in as a witness because one of the Generals involved in the plot had come to him and confessed what he intended to do. When it is revealed that the priest knew about the plot in advance but did not inform the SS, he is defrocked, and in a subsequent scene is on trial for his own life.

"My parishioner merely consulted me about an abstract spiritual question," the priest says in his own defense. "He asked me whether in my opinion it was a sin to kill a tyrant. I told him in my opinion it was not, if the tyrannical deeds were clearly enough established."

"But when you told the General that, you must have known he was referring to Hitler," Judge Freisler shrieks, in one of his rare lapses into humor, albeit unconscious.

This film, according to several German film workers we interrogated, ended with scenes of the actual execution, which was carried out in the cruelest possible way, the convicted men being hung by their necks on large meat hooks from which they writhed for 15 or 20 minutes before they died. This was described to me by one German cameraman assigned to cover the event, who fainted the first day and was unable to return.

Viewing the film, with its grisly ending included, was compulsory for all Wehrmacht officers of the rank of colonel and above, and for all German embassies and consulates, since the putsch had been an old-line-Wehrmacht-old-school-diplomat job, with a smattering of Social-Democratic support. The effect of the film, however, according to numerous informants, was the opposite of that intended, for it discredited Nazi

justice and exhibited Nazi savagery to already disaffected elements. For this reason, Goebbels recalled it from circulation.

Through Rode's knowledge of Nazi film details, we began to make progress in other directions. Learning that the negatives of all German newsreels were stored at the Reich Film Archive at Babelsberg, I went to the Soviet officer in charge, Major Arinarius, explained my mission and asked for permission to make prints of the entire Nazi period from those in his possession.

Arinarius, a tall, thin, ascetic-looking intellectual, studied me a little suspiciously, I thought. "What is a naval officer doing looking for films in Germany?" he wanted to know.

"Well, it is a little hard to explain," I said, "but I belong to a Photographic Naval Unit headed by Captain John Ford which has been put in charge of photographic evidence for the Nuremberg trial."

"John Ford, the director?" Arinarius said.

"Yes," I said. "You've heard of him?"

"In my book on the history of motion pictures," Arinarius said, "I gave Ford two chapters. The Iron Horse is still one of my favorite pictures." To tell the truth, I had forgotten what pictures Ford had made in the silent days, but Arinarius knew them all. Here in the Russian zone, on the outskirts of Berlin, I had run into Ford's greatest and surely most erudite fan. "Dawn Patrol, Young Mr. Lincoln, The Informer, Stage Coach, The Long Voyage Home, The Grapes of Wrath, How Green Was My Valley . . .," Arinarius continued, "every one of these pictures I have analyzed in my book." He smiled at me for the first time. "Tell me, will John Ford (he pronounced it as one word, Djonford) be coming over to take charge personally?"

At that moment I had no idea whether Jack was in Hollywood, Washington or in China with Wedemeyer. "Oh, yes, we expect him over any time now," I said.

"Good, good," Arinarius said. "Now what is it you wanted, some film?"

I explained our mission all over again.

"Very interesting," Arinarius said. "Pick me up tomorrow morning at nine o'clock in your jeep."

The next morning at nine o'clock Major Arinarius, attended by

three moon-faced, roly-poly Russian girls, was having tea. I accepted his invitation to join him. It was almost noon when we rose. I had spent three hours talking, or rather, listening to him discuss Hollywood. For at least three-quarters of an hour, he analyzed the humor of Mack Sennett and how it has influenced all subsequent Hollywood comedy, even the contemporary work of Walt Disney. He compared Ford with other outstanding American directors, Capra, Wyler, McCarey . . . he knew them all. But when he really endeared himself to me (and to all brother Guildsmen, I'm sure) was when, in discussing *Casablanca*, he said, "Let me see, that was written by the brothers Epstein, was it not?"

Arinarius then proceeded to cite the screen credits of every prominent picture released in the last five years. It's part of his job in civilian life, he told me, as a professor of motion picture history at the Cinematic Institute in Moscow. As an alternate member of the Executive Board in absentia, and this a very small voice indeed, I vote one complimentary subscription to this magazine to Major Arinarius.

"Before you publish your next book," I told him, "You should come to Hollywood and do some of your research right in the studios." "Oh, no, I mustn't," Arinarius said. "I've found so much new material here in Berlin I've had to postpone publication six months. If I went to Hollywood I'd have to postpone it six years!"

That afternoon, I drove out with Arinarius to Babelsberg, where the Film Archive had camouflaged its concrete vaults as ivy-covered peasant cottages. The old caretaker who had been there for years told us that key men in the Goebbels outfit had come out there personally, just before the Russians entered the city, and burned the top secret films which included SS murders of Jews and Poles, photographed by special SS film units. We did receive from Arinarius, however, all the newsreel negatives we needed for our chronological record of the Nazis in power. In another bunker we found biographical material on all the Nazi leaders, including a two-reel monologue by Rosenberg describing in detail the formation of the Nazi party, the abortive attempt to seize power in 1923, and the ten-year struggle that ended with Hitler's assuming dictatorial power from the Reichstag in 1933. This film, to which Jackson referred in his opening address, was used to introduce the four-hour documentary

on The Nazi Conspiracy to Seize Power and Wage Aggressive War, supplementing Counts One and Two of the Allies' Indictment.

We had only carried out a fraction of what we had found, however, when Major Arinarius suggested that we abandon our search and return to Berlin. He was completely sympathetic with our mission, he explained, but he could not throw open all the bunkers to us without the permission of his colonel.

At this point, we decided upon a flanking attack to break down the colonel's resistance, in the form of a lavish dinner, complete with vodka and repeated toasts to Soviet-American friendship. Here is where the talents of Jack Munroe and his fine Scotch hand came into play. Ever since we had hit the ETO, Jack had rushed in where junior officers feared to tread. When visas to Switzerland took three weeks, Jack got them in three minutes. When Wagon-Lit accommodations were reserved for field-grade officers and above, Jack got us the best compartment on the train. When private houses in the exclusive Wann-See section of Berlin were ear-marked for Generals, Jack got two, one of which we used as a work-house and projection room. When full colonels were walking from their billets to mess because of the shortage of transportation, Jack promoted three cars and drivers.

That evening all of Munroe's ammunition was fired at the unsuspecting Red Army Colonel. At eight o'clock our car was sent for him. At half-past-ten, two and one half hours late for the steak dinner our German housekeeper had been consulting with Munroe about all day, the Colonel arrived, with Major Arinarius, Major Viergang and several other Russian officers we had not expected. With a perfectly straight face, Munroe went to the piano and played Song of the Plains. After half-a-dozen cocktails toasting each other, Stalin, Truman, lasting friendship, etc., and etc., we sat down to dinner.

We arose about one o'clock in the morning, with the Colonel finishing the last of our Bordeaux but promising to send us a case of his own Caucasian wine in the morning. Then we staggered over to the other house to run the July 20 film which the Soviet officers had never seen and a print of which they were anxious to obtain. The five-reel film was run one reel at a time, with ten-minute intermissions for refreshments. At three o'clock in the morning the Colonel, who everyone said was a

member of the NKVD, was dancing in the street with one of our WAC interpreters. "We must work closer together," he said happily as he and his staff drove off just as the sun was coming up over the Wann-See.

The next afternoon we drove back to Babelsberg, followed by a truck. When we left that evening, the truck was full. Our toasts, thrown out upon the vodka, had brought results. Among the films we obtained that day were every single Party Day Congress from the very first one in 1923, in which Himmler and Hess appear with Hitler in short Bavarian pants looking like Hitler Jugend. There was also a Party film on the 1932 election, with SA men patrolling the streets and an SA machine-gun unit lined up outside a trade-union headquarters. Another valuable document, marked "Geheim - Oberkammando" (Secret, by order of the High Command), was a horrendous two-reel film depicting the rounding up of the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto and their inevitable burial in mass graves. German thoroughness is seen in its most frightening aspect in one shot in which a uniformed cameraman can be seen at the bottom of a mass grave getting a reverse shot as naked, emaciated bodies, including those of small children and infants, come hurtling toward him.

While our cutters, half American Navy, half German Ufa, under the direction of Bob Parrish (now back at Universal), assembled this material, which the translators and analysts were annotating, the search for other films continued. In Munich my brother uncovered not only the entire Heinrich Hoffman film library, but Hitler's old friend Hoffman himself. Like all the other Germans we encountered, Hoffman was perfectly willing to lend his services to the Allied cause, even though in this case he was helping us tighten the noose around the neck of his own son-in-law, Baldur Von Schirach, one of the 21 defendants. Hoffman's excellent library, his cooperation and Sgt. Schulberg's diligence produced one of the major contributions to photographic evidence at Nuremberg.

From Switzerland came word from both OWI and undercover sources that a considerable amount of Nazi film had found its way out of the German Legation into the hands of private Swiss exhibitors. From Jerry Mayer at the American Legation I learned how this had happened. In the final days of the Third Reich, with the situation at the German Legation naturally chaotic, a third assistant secretary had stolen all confidential films and sold them to various distributors in Bern and Zurich.

Some of this material had been confiscated by the Swiss police and turned over to the Swiss Film Archive. The largest amount had been sold to a private distributor called Rehber. Among these films were supposed to be the notorious July 20th execution scene.

Through the assistance of Mayer and a Polish refugee projectionist who worked for him I located Rehber, who denied having the execution films but who was willing to sell me a number of others, providing I told no one where I had received them. Among these films was *Spain in Flames*, a German documentary testifying to the aid given Franco by the Luftwaffe and a division of "volunteers" from the Wehrmacht. It ends with a close shot of Franco, at this writing a much more pacific individual, thanking the German air-force and ground-force commanders for their assistance.

At the Swiss Film Archive in Basle, thanks to its director, Dr. Peter Bachlin (who gave me **his** book about motion pictures which I later presented to Major Arinarius), I was able to obtain several more Nazi films of value, including a Hitler Youth picture in which Baldur Von Schirach (whom Father-in-law Heinrich Hoffman described to us as a tender-hearted, peace-loving "saint") tells his Jugend, back in '35, that there are more important things to do than die of old age, that the greatest achievement of their lives would be to die for the Fuehrer. (NOTE: Before we left Switzerland we found out that Rehber actually had sold the execution films — to the Spanish Legation.)

By this time we had assembled so much film at our studio in Spaldau (the former Wehrmacht studio) that it would have been easier to make a 400-reel record of Nazi crime. All I can remember about those last few weeks is the way Ray Kellogg, Bob Parrish, Bob Webb, Joe Zigman, Susie Shestopel and their groggy and protesting German assistants bent over those Moviolas around the clock. I'll never forget standing outside our cutting rooms about three o'clock one morning, listening to the roars of a great crowd sieg-heiling from one Moviola, the Horst Wessel Song crashing from another, Hitler's voice screaming from a third and thinking what a sweet miracle it was to be able to turn off this organized insanity merely by slapping it into a film can and putting it back on the shelf.

When the Trial finally opened Nov. 20, there was still a week of final editing to do. Nobody knew just when, in the first two weeks,

Justice Jackson would call for the films. Com. Donovan was calling every few hours, it seemed to us, to know when the films were arriving in Nuremberg. Thanks to Kellogg's endurance, the speed with which Parrish, Webb and the other cutters worked, and the legal assistance of Dr. Alex Pathé, an international law expert, born in Hungary, brought up in Egypt and now practicing in New York, our films arrived in Nuremberg just under the wire.

When the first film was run, a one-hour presentation of Nazi atrocities compiled by Com. Donovan and Ray Kellogg, I sat at the Russian defense table (Mr. Rankin, please note!), because it was closest to the defendants' dock. When the film reached its unbelievable climax, with corpses piled so high at Belsen that a bulldozer had to be driven through them to clear a path, and the lights came on, I stared, like everybody else in the court-room, at those 21 men. Field Marshal Keitel, as several newspapermen reported correctly, wiped tears from his eyes. Von Ribbentrop, the elegant, who had always had an answer for everything, looked down into his lap and shook his head. Raeder and Doenitz stared straight ahead unseeing. Von Papen and Von Neurath, the diplomats, who had maintained a pompous assurance during the first week of the trial, looked wilted and spent. Rosenberg leaned his forehead against the top of the dock. Seyss-Inquart, the cold-eyed, florid-faced Austrian from whom Quisling had learned how to be one, hid his face in his hands. Even Goering, the ham and the comic who had been winking, scoffing, laughing and catching the eyes of fellow-defendants in private jokes, looked subdued at last, his fleshy face sagging.

But the most unexpected reaction of all was that of Hans Frank, charged with the murder of five million Poles. When the lights came on, Frank was doubled over, his face buried in his hands. When all the other defendants had finally risen and passed through the doorway on their way back to their cells, Frank continued to sit there motionlessly, until guards began to lift him up forcibly. His wet red eyes stood out in his white frightened face. Later one of the guards who helped lead him out said to me, "How d'ya figure that, huh? A guy like that! He acted like he was gonna pass out."

The four-hour Conspiracy film did not produce quite such a sensational effect on the accused. In fact, at certain points, when the Nazis

were pictured at the height of their power, Goering and the others would look across at each other and smile and tap their feet to the old familiar marches. But the Paris edition of the Herald-Tribune next day hailed the film as one of the highlights of the trial up to that point and it was generally acknowledged in the courtroom that not even the most damaging documentary evidence had so succeeded in dramatizing and crystallizing the case of the civilized world against international gangsterism.

At Nuremberg, an important step has been taken in the establishment of international law and the securing of permanent peace. Film-workers can be proud that, thanks to the foresight and imagination of Justice Jackson and OSS' young General Counsel Jim Donovan, the power of motion pictures was employed for the first time in any major trial. Motion pictures had gone to war. Now they were helping to win the peace.

★ ★ ★

AMERICAN MERCURY SCRIPTS: CORRECTION

In our May issue, THE SCREEN WRITER printed a statement that "the editors of The American Mercury have sold their back files to the Scribner Book Store, 597 Fifth Avenue, New York, which is offering in its manuscript catalogue various scripts that were published in this magazine not only recently, but under the editorship of Mencken, Angoff, Palmer, etc."

A further check reveals that, in the words of the Scribner Book Store, "the entire transaction took place without the knowledge of any person presently connected with The American Mercury." A letter from Lawrence E. Spivak, editor and publisher of The American Mercury, says that there has been no sale of manuscripts published since 1939 when he bought control of the magazine. He states that the policy of the magazine since the days of Mencken has been to return all manuscripts to authors on request, or to destroy them after one year. That policy still prevails.

We regret that an erroneous impression was given, and hope that it has caused the editors of The American Mercury no embarrassment.

Writers who may have pre-1939 Mercury scripts listed in the Scribner catalogue should get in touch with that book store, if they wish to have them withdrawn from sale. Those dealing with the present editors of The Mercury may be assured of proper disposal of their scripts, and need have no fear of their falling into the hands of manuscript dealers.

★ ★ ★

THE SCREEN WRITER AND TELEVISION

GEORGE COREY

TELEVISION has finally left the realm of futures and become a reality; a reality to the writer, for it is now actually paying cash for literary material and writers' services. Individual stations in many East Coast cities are already telecasting on regular schedule, and NBC will have an Eastern network in operation this year linking New York, Washington, Schenectady and Philadelphia, in what will become within two to three years a Coast-to-Coast network.

To those of us writing for motion pictures, confronted with a constantly shrinking market for our services through the reduction of the number of productions each year, television has an important bearing on our economic welfare in the immediate future, for it promises a large market for writers' services and literary properties. In this article, I will limit myself to a presentation of some of the economic aspects of this new industry as they pertain to the screen writer in particular.

While it can be said that television promises future employment for services and a market for properties, its economic aspects are beset by many contradictions. The first hurdle concerns the separation of telecasting facilities from the talent it will eventually use. The establishment of telecasting networks is beginning on the East Coast and will remain east of the Mississippi River for approximately another two years, while the bulk of the acting, writing, direction and production talent that network television will need is concentrated on the West Coast. Thus, the

In the fall of 1945 the Authors' League Council established a committee in New York to study television and a similar Television Committee for the West Coast was appointed, composed of two representatives from the Radio Writers' Guild, Dramatists' Guild, Authors' Guild and Screen Writers' Guild. GEORGE COREY was one of the two Screen Writers' Guild representatives on the West Coast Committee.

screen writer is going to be physically isolated from major television operations for some time to come. A few local telecast stations will begin operations in Los Angeles within the next year, but they will not be substantial buyers of writing talent or properties.

Another unsolved question involves who is going to pay for television. This question boils down to commercial advertising sponsorship vs. straight entertainment as now provided by film companies, with some arrangement for taxation or trick gadget to collect the admission from the living-room customer. At the present time, the commercial advertising forces would seem to be in the driver's seat.

The question of who will pay for television, that is, who will engage the artists, is proving to be a very important factor in who is going to write for television. Up to the present time, most of the writing in television is being done by former radio writers, largely because advertising agencies and radio networks are the current entrepreneurs, and commercial television is closer in form to commercial radio than to any other medium. Television is also developing its own writers, just as radio developed many writers without writing experience in other fields.

Where, then, does the screen writer come off in this new medium? If it is to be several years before the networks get out to California and, in form, the medium affords an easier transition for radio writers, why should the screen writer bother with it?

Television, even in its present primitive stage, begins with very high production costs. While for commercial use the new medium is closer to radio in form, its cost of production is closer to that of motion pictures. This is particularly true for dramatic productions, and remains true whether the television offering is done from film or by live telecast.

Without attempting to go into the issue of live shows vs. film shows for telecasting, it can be said the cost remains about the same. Because this cost is already high and can be expected to mount rapidly as the industry grows and the medium develops, television producers cannot afford the same kind of "growing-up" period that pictures and radio enjoyed, or suffered. Almost from the beginning, the television operator must know that the writer on a dramatic show has some history of success in visual dramatic writing. This was not true in pictures where for many years prior to sound almost anyone willing to try could "write" for

films. Certainly it was not true in radio where production costs were negligible and where for many years the writing was done by anyone who dared try. Air time was cheap, production cost slight, so no one but the listener complained while many of us learned dramatic writing on a Coast-to-Coast blackboard.

While many radio writers will move over into the visual writing field of television, the screen writer has the edge on almost all other types of writers competing for the writing chores in this new industry, because he can point to definite film credits, as proof of his ability. Because of the high cost of telecasting, the industry begins with the owners having much the same concern with proven writing ability that the motion picture producers acquired after twenty years of operation.

Another question concerning the screen writer's economic relationship to television is that of the nature of the television market. Is it a market for writing services or for literary properties? At the present time, for the average screen writer, it is a better market for the sale of properties than for writing services. The salaries now paid for writing television are considerably lower than the top wages paid in radio; so, for the average screen writer to work in television now would mean a reduction in salary. The market for properties, however, is quite brisk and only a few weeks ago the National Broadcasting Company sent Richard P. McDonagh of its radio script department to Los Angeles to scout telecast material from screen writers. Other stations in the East are currently buying short stories, sketches, one-act plays for telecast.

All of the above questions are still debatable and a year's actual experience of day-to-day telecasting may change the conclusions drawn. There is, however, one certain and all-important fact about television which is known and beyond questioning.

Television is a new baby. No one knows very much about it as yet, but as we begin to examine the pink-cheeked infant there is something not quite infantile about it. Its dramatic gurglings are as primitive as *The Great Train Robbery* and many of its hours of telecasting resemble the better-forgotten moments of *Chautauqua*; yet there is something strangely senile about this new baby. You feel it in the attitude of the television producer to the writer, in the producer's interest in writers' credits, in the jaundiced scrutiny of recognized literary properties, in the

contract discussions with writers. Artistically the baby may be drooling, but there's no piggy-bank around the crib, for, unlike publishing, the theatre, films or radio, television opened its eyes to the light of day in the Bankers' Trust Building.

Historians of television will have no romantic yarns to tell of shoe-stringing a vacant store into a chain of movie palaces, or riding a coffee-pot radio station in Cincinnati onto the big board of the Stock Exchange. The tremendous physical cost of original plants, the tight control of the co-axial cable lines by the great communications cartels, and the staggering expense of continuous telecasting, not only slam the door on shoestringers, but for all practical purposes limit major station operations and network affiliations to those who can lay vast resources on the line.

While the Federal Communications Commission, the government bureau for allotting television channels, will stumble through the democratic ritual of assigning wave-lengths for a fee of One Dollar to individuals and corporations avowedly dedicated to Public Service, television is destined to be controlled by RCA, A. T. & T., General Electric, Westinghouse, Western Electric, and their subsidiaries. There will be new names and faces among the owners of stations, but actual control will be vested in the great electrical cartels, for they hold cards that defy the FCC's efforts — cards in the form of basic patents, processes, manufacturing resources and cash.

As citizens of a democracy, we may wince at the injustice of turning television over to the monopolies, and as citizens we should protest the use of this magnificent new medium to peddle more kidney pills and soap. Yet, as writers, faced with the task of earning a living, we must be prepared to deal with the reality of monopoly control.

The history of writers in the early days of pictures and in the growing-up period of radio provides us some important conclusions. Many people amassed fortunes in these media, but conspicuously missing, among the people so enriched, are the names of writers. It was difficult for a writer to resist being fleeced in radio and motion pictures during the years these industries were growing. There was no SWG or RWG. Because the studio owners and station operators were often shoestringing, there was a kernel of sincerity in their pleas of "inability to pay." The absence of writers' guilds and the semblance of truth in the owners'

plea, together with writers' failure to conceive even a vague notion of the real value of their own properties and the properties they created for weekly wages, amounted to writers subsidizing radio and motion pictures through their infancies.

The owners of television may be expected to make the same plea, despite their great financial resources. It will come in forms familiar to those who worked in radio in the early Thirties. "Audiences are small," — "The revenue from time sales is limited," — "The writer must play ball for a few years and adjust his fees to what the market can afford." Older writers will remember "This-is-where-they-came-in" — on pictures and radio.

Most other crafts and guilds whose services will be needed in television have already turned a deaf ear to these pleas. Musicians, sound engineers, cameramen, projectionists, actors, electricians, set dressers, scenic designers, etc., through their guilds and unions are demanding that television contracts be equal to or better than existing contracts with picture studios and radio stations. The only possible place the television producer can cut production costs is by reducing writers' wages or cutting royalty fees. The theory underlying the position of the guilds and unions is one of refusing to retreat from their wage gains in order to subsidize a new industry.

The writer as an individual contractor has special problems in establishing equitable royalty fees and wage rates, but the same underlying theory of refusing to listen to the "ability-to-pay" argument must hold for writers, too. It will be easier for writers to hold fast to this position, because the financial dossiers of most television operators will prove they are financially able to subsidize their own growing-up period. Writers will not share ownership of the huge networks the monopolies are creating, so why should we be asked to contribute to the building of them?

Because writers failed to take this position and accepted the wage rates and royalty fees dictated by advertising agencies and networks back in the early Thirties, radio writing remained a badly-underpaid vocation for many years. It took a world war, a manpower shortage, an absence of newsprint, and an unprecedented industrial boom to hike radio writers' wages and royalty fees for literary properties to a point that might be

called reasonably equitable. We can prevent this ten- or twelve-year period of low wages and royalty fees, in television, only if the members of all four Guilds demand wages and royalty fees approximately equivalent to the top fees and wages paid in radio.

The first step in the writers' battle to obtain equitable compensation in television must be staged around the issue of the retention of ownership of literary properties. The members of all four Guilds must refuse outright sales of television rights and insist upon leasing or licensing their material for one or at the most two telecasts. This issue of holding onto ownership is the core of the fight for all compensation rates in television. It will not only affect those who have properties to sell, but will have a direct bearing on the wages paid writers engaged by the week or permanent staff members of stations.

Writers in radio know the close relationship between royalty fees and weekly wages. When fighting to get salaries upped to \$200 a week, we were slapped down with the fact that the royalty fees paid Kaufman and Hart and Robert Sherwood, for *You Can't Take It With You* and *Petrified Forest*, were less than \$200. How could anonymous radio adapters ask for more money to adapt a play than Kaufman and Hart and Sherwood were getting as a royalty fee?

Television offers a real opportunity for the writers of America to profit by the experiences of the thirty-year-old struggle for the protection of authors' property rights. Only now, after many years, has the SWG begun to tackle the problem of the writers retaining ownership of material. The Radio Writers' Guild at this very moment is engaged in a showdown battle with the advertising agencies for the same right. And the plan for the establishment of an American Authors' Authority has come into being.

Examination of the first important contract executed between writers and television operators gives reason to believe writers can make their economic relationship to television the most equitable of all. It is an agreement between the Dramatists' Guild and the National Broadcasting Company. This contract proves that the core of our protection is in the retention of ownership of television rights.

Under the terms of this new contract, NBC recognizes the author's ownership of his television rights. NBC gets only the right to project a

play once by television. For that right it pays \$250. If the performance is sponsored by an advertiser, the author gets an extra \$100. The contract also grants NBC the right to a single repeat broadcast, at \$100 more, or \$150 more if the second broadcast should be sponsored by an advertiser.

Although the amount of money involved in this contract is not large, the fact that NBC recognizes the author's rights, and only leases the property for one or two telecasts, establishes the basis for what in the years to come will amount to millions of dollars which have heretofore gone into the pockets of studio owners, advertising agencies, broadcast-stations and independent producers. A one-shot telecast that becomes the basis for a motion picture or a play will no longer enrich the producer alone. The tremendous power of this new medium to create valuable literary properties over night will work to the benefit of the author as well as a radio network, advertising agency or producer.

Writers will occupy an important and highly remunerative role in television. The strength of our guilds and the lessons we have learned in radio, motion pictures, the theatre and publishing, will enable us for the first time to bargain on genuinely equitable terms.

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A VERY RESPONSIBLE FELLOW

A member of the Screen Writers' Guild had occasion last month to write the following letter to the publisher of a certain trade paper which we are not in the habit of reading. The letter read:

Dear Billy:

For years I have derived much information and considerable misinformation from The Hollywood Reporter. I am also indebted to you for a great deal of innocent amusement contained in your impassioned editorials.

I am writing you today, however, with a heart overflowing with gratitude and trembling with hope. Something I read in your issue of Wednesday, July 17th, inclines me to the view that in your old age you are becoming mellow and an ancient hatchet is about to be buried.

In a very cordial review of Home Sweet Homicide, of which I wrote the screen play, I noted that after producer and director were duly credited by name your critic added the following pregnant and significant sentence: "The screen play was prepared by the fellow responsible for the teen-age Corliss Archer character."

I think this is damn white of you, Billy, and I want you to know that I love you. Naturally, I am unable to sign this letter, but I feel sure you will be able to deduce that it comes from

The Fellow Responsible
For The Teen-age Corliss
Archer Character.

★ ★ ★

C R E D I T S A R E N O T E N O U G H

DONALD KIRKLEY

FOR seventeen years I wrote movie reviews in which the names of original authors, adaptors and additional dialoguers were rarely mentioned. There seemed to be good reasons for this policy — humanitarian ones. About a year ago, I let my judgment be swayed by the pitiful pleas uttered from time to time in the pages of *The Screen Writer*. I now give credit where the press book says it is due, even for horse operas.

Looking back, I am somewhat appalled by the results, from the point of view of the original author, adaptor and additional dialoguer. I derive no pleasure from the infliction of pain, and I can only hope that you screen writers, being far removed from Baltimore in space, have not read what has been said about most of your scripts in *The Sun*.

It's not that you are singled out for special comment — I know very well that you are often obliged to write down to the level of the intelligence of the producer. It's just that, technically, you must take the rap for the words spoken by the characters in the photoplay which carries your by-line.

What puzzles me is why you gentlemen did not let well enough alone; why you chose to leave the comfortable fog of anonymity and stick out your necks for the critical ax; why you are so eager to be associated by name with the childish drivel with which nine out of ten pictures are encumbered.

It goes beyond mere bad writing. Far too many films are morally

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crooked, deliberate and egregious fakes, vicious libels on well-known people, usually dead and unable to defend themselves. I won't list titles, not wishing to involve individuals. You know them as well as I do — the "biographies" which have distorted scientists, literary men, composers, inventors, song writers, desperadoes, peace officers, theatrical producers, soldiers, prizefighters, racing automobile drivers, saints and war heroes, out of all semblance of the truth.

I realize that few writers, of their own accord, would foist such frauds on the public. I know that few would twist good novels out of shape and reduce vital books to flat, stale and sterile rehashings of Formula 4 B. No writer would do such things unless he were very well paid to do so; unless he were on leash to an unscrupulous producer. It is plain that the script-teaser must follow the ideas prescribed by executives who have the final say in these matters. I am aware of, and applaud, the vigorous campaign conducted by the Screen Writers' Guild to free the writer from such trammels.

But the system of credits-giving which prevails today does not allow the reviewer any leeway in apportioning the blame for these things. There is the dialogue and there is the plot, and the press book gives us only the names of the persons technically responsible.

It seems to me that the authors of the nine-out-of-ten photoplays should be more interested in keeping their real names off the credit list and out of the newspapers, than in flaunting the connection.

Under the present system, with promotion and pay depending largely on an accumulation of credits rather than talent, it is obvious that screen writers are hooked, and can achieve only partial escape by using noms-de-typewriter. It is true, moreover, that some of the worst phonies pile up the highest grosses, which is all that counts with most of the dollar-conscious gentlemen who own, or think they own, the writers.

Until SWG can change the system — and let's not hold our breaths while waiting — we must be content with counter-measures devised to keep the record straight with press and public. There are several things which can be done, without too much trouble or expense, and that brings me to the purpose of this writing.

Why not establish direct contact between writers and reviewers? Why not send to every critic of any consequence a memorandum of the

facts regarding the composition of every script? Let us know where the ideas originated; how much, say, the producer, director, their relatives and other kibitzers had in shaping the photoplay. If sundry uncredited brains doctored it a bit, tell us about them. If important changes in a novel or historical character were dictated, say so. It would not be necessary to give names. The memorandum could be marked "confidential" or not, as the writer pleases. Most newspapermen respect the "off the record" label. Stick to facts, make no complaints, do no editorializing. Just tell us the story behind the story, and we'll do the rest.

Who would do the compiling and distributing and provide the postage? I can think of several methods. The SWG could set up the machinery, appoint a supervisory committee, check on the communications, devise a standard form, and link this activity with the general drive to enhance the power and prestige of the writer.

If the writer is big enough to afford a press agent of his own, this would fall within the latter's province. All that's needed, in addition to a true summary of events, is access to a mimeographing machine, several hundred envelopes per picture, a few dollars worth of stamps and a mailing list.

Or the writer could do the job himself, on a person-to-person basis. It shouldn't take much time, and he needn't even hurry. Usually there's a considerable lag between the completion of a film and its release. Except in rare cases, a page of copy should be enough; perhaps only a paragraph or two.

This would work two ways. If, for any reasons, the credited writers are not responsible, in part, for a poor script, they will be protected against indiscriminate panning. If, on the other hand, the film turns out to be that one-in-ten specimen, and the authors take special pride in it, the reviewer would be able to give them more than the casual phrase of praise in the last paragraph.

Once the person-to-person contact is established, a writer could do himself and the reviewer a favor by sending along a little biographical sketch. Writers are often interesting people with interesting pasts, and there is material here for Sunday columns and special stories. As things are today, we know almost nothing about the story tellers, aside from the brush-off they get in the press book. I'd like to have a sketch — as long

as possible — to keep in my files for future reference. I'll be glad to build up the writer if he'll supply the material.

Speaking for myself, I am more than willing to make this a two-way service. Send me a memorandum on your next picture, and your home address, and I'll send you a copy of my review.

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PHOTOPLAY GOLD MEDAL AWARDS

It has been announced by Fred R. Sammis, editorial director of Photoplay, that beginning with this year's productions screen writers will be added to the list receiving Photoplay Gold Medal Awards.

The Gold Medal Awards are presented annually in Hollywood to the year's best-liked actor and actress, and to the studio, director and producer of the year's favorite motion picture, on the basis of the continuous scientific poll conducted among the nation's movie audiences by Dr. George Gallup's Audience Research, Inc.

In 1945, the Photoplay Gold Medals were presented to Greer Garson, as the nation's favorite actress; Bing Crosby, as the nation's favorite actor; to M-G-M as producers of *The Valley of Decision*, the year's favorite motion picture, and Tay Garnett and Edwin Knopf, director and producer of that film.

In addition, small gold medallions were presented to the supporting cast and to the credit list of the winning picture; and Photoplay Certificates were presented to the producers of the year's top ten movies and to the year's five most popular actors and actresses.

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THE OLGA SHAPIRO AWARD

In memory of Olga Shapiro, staunch supporter of all who strove for a decent and just society, her friends, aware of her abundant faith in the theatre as an effective medium for the dynamic presentation of mankind's problems and their solution, announce the second year of an annual award of Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00), to be given to the playwright whose play best meets the following conditions:

"The play must be one which is on the side of the people, which speaks in terms of humanity, and has scope and vision. It may be the story of an average family or one of world conflict. It must be full-length, in any style or category, and a practical stage work as to acting and production."

The judges, all highly qualified in their theatrical specialties, are John Gassner, Margaret Webster and Kermit Bloomgarden.

The contest closes at midnight, Dec. 31, 1946, except for overseas entries. The award is scheduled for announcement March 1, 1947.

The release from the committee does not state whether produced plays are eligible, or only those in manuscript form; nor does it specify whether the award carries with it any production options (presumably there are none). For further information, rules and application forms, interested playwrights are instructed to write: The Olga Shapiro Award, Suite 501, 112 West 42nd St., New York 18, N. Y.

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THE UNLICK'D BEAR WHELP

MARY C. McCALL, JR.

SCREEN writers want recognition for their work. They want their contribution to motion pictures critically evaluated. Mr. Emmet Lavery and Mr. Bosley Crowther have recently had words on this subject. Mr. Wolfe Kaufman, himself both writer and critic, though not, I believe, simultaneously, has expressed himself on this question in these pages. Mr. Kaufman dismissed the bulk of our work as carpentry.

I think that every time a writer signs a term contract with a studio, every time a free-lance writer answers a call from a story editor or a producer, and, after an interview, accepts an assignment to adapt to the screen someone else's work, he is laying a wreath of immortelles on the grave of silent pictures. And the dull red flush that creeps up my neck when I say that is proof that I have been, am, and probably will be a wreath-layer myself.

The coming of sound transformed the motion picture from an artistic sack-race into a story-telling medium both flexible and potent. It is possible to pick a dime out of a plate of flour with one's teeth and without using one's hands. But no one would recommend that method as the simplest, speediest, or most sensible way of picking up the dime. It was possible to tell a story through inaudible characters, whose artificial mutism was somewhat alleviated by sub-titles. It is possible today to communicate a story to an audience using only that audience's ears as a means of ingress to its mind. But I think any radio writer is rooting for the perfecting of television.

The vestigial remains of the bad old days of motion pictures can be

MARY C. McCALL, JR., a member of the Executive Board of the Screen Writers' Guild, is one of Hollywood's most distinguished screen writers, author of a long list of highly successful films.

seen in most studios. Stains and scars on the sides of stages memorialize the closing-up of doors which soundproofing made necessary. Ten or twelve years ago, cameras were still muffled in padded cloths to silence their whirring. The sound-proof metal jacketing they wear today is relatively new. But on lots where all the stages were built new for talking pictures, where the mike boom is, of course, standard equipment, and the camera utterly silent, there is still a contract list of writers, a stable of writers. The word "scenario" is quaint, but not obsolete, and "continuity" and "dialog" are not archaisms. The bulk of the story material purchased by the studio is still stories told first by their creators in another medium, presumably because that other medium seemed to those creators the best way of telling those stories. So-called "originals" get place money, and "original screen plays," written on speculation and not on assignment, are lucky to show.

The split and departmentalized credits which we, the Screen Writers' Guild, recognize as honest labelling of our work, include "Screen Play By," "Original Screen Play By," "Adaptation By," "Additional Dialog By," "Additional Scenes By." "Written By" we'll accept, as long as the picture story originates with the picture writers. I submit that the best credit of all is the simple "By." The true by-line can, of course, be justly used only to indicate the authorship of a true screen play — a play for the screen, the "originality" of which is, naturally, implicit. Screen dramatizations of novels, screen adaptations of plays, English translations of the French, the German, the Italian, the Scandinavian, the Hungarian, the Russian, the Greek, would not merit the stark "by" which means authorship, which means creation.

The quantitative and qualitative unimportance of "Original Screen Plays" was clearly shown this year by the Reminder List issued by the Academy at the time of the Awards voting. I found difficulty in making five nominations from that short and undistinguished list, and in the final voting, I could make only my first choice with any real enthusiasm.

I think we will come of age as screen writers when we turn our backs on economic security and our faces to our medium. When a writer, alone, or with one other writer, risks his time and his effort to write a play for the screen, choosing that medium for artistic and not for financial reasons, and that brave and honest way of working becomes the rule,

and not the exception, the Good New Days of motion pictures will be here.

These true screen playwrights, if you'll pardon the expression, will have control of their material. They will have bargaining power. They can lease their plays and not sell them — lease them for one English-language production, reserving all other rights. They can say “no” to an ad-libbing actor, “behave yourself” to a pencil-happy producer. A percentage of the picture's profits will be theirs by right of authorship. They can demand, and get, a voice in casting, and the selection of a director will be subject to their approval. Their writing will have style, as a wood has grain, as a fabric has texture. There will be flaws in it, their flaws, and excellence, their excellence. It will have flavor, this true screen-writing, and that flavor won't be vanilla.

Our Guild Veterans' Committee has asked the Executive Board, and the membership in support of the Board and the Committee, to work for the achievement of a minimum annual wage for screen writers. As a Board member, as a Guild member, I intend to fight against this guaranteed annual income as a goal, a desideratum for us. It would mean economic security of a sort, economic security which no other writing men and women enjoy, except the salaried staff of magazines so oddly narrow in scope or highly technical in subject matter that no free lance contributor can supply their peculiar needs.

How expensive would this meagre security be? I think it would cost us critical recognition, and the right to critical recognition, forever. It would end for good and all the hope of our controlling what we write. It would prolong indefinitely the archaism of the present writer-studio relationship. If we accept a guaranteed annual wage from the producing companies, we must accept, too, that absurd piece of legal hanky-panky by which Mammoth Pictures, Inc., a Delaware Corporation, becomes not only the owner, but the **author** of material written on its payroll.

I grant that writing is a chancy line of work, that few writers earn as much as stenographers, that it is painfully hard to create with the gun of debt pressed against one's temple. I've lived by free-lance, unsubsidized writing, and a meagre and worried life it often was. But I dared it, I risked it, I survived it, and whatever security I achieved, I got by writing stories of my own, and selling them in an open and competitive

market. I stuck to writing because I liked to write, because I had no other aptitudes, because, within a reasonable time, I found out that I could sell what I wrote for enough to support me. Van Gogh never sold a picture during his lifetime except to his brother, yet he kept on painting. I had no Dear Theo. If I'd been unable to support myself by writing, I would have had to stop and to search for some other way of earning my living.

We embarked on many Federal and State work programs during the depression. I believed in the need for them and the rightness of the idea behind them with all my mind. But those programs were launched to create work for people capable of work, but unable, because of the economic paralysis the nation was suffering from, to get work to do. I'm for the Old Age Pension, for those whose productive years are past. I believe in Social Security, where the fruits of the earning years are stored up for the future. I think our veteran-writers, whose careers were interrupted by violence, deserve a guaranteed term of employment so they may re-establish themselves. But to me, an annual guaranteed wage for writers who are still potent, still creative, working in a field where there is and always will be a market for capably-written material, is retrogression, not progress. I think it will indefinitely postpone the day when we can lick our own bear whelps, and give them forever the impression of the dam.

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HOLLYWOOD'S WORLD VIEW

★ New Movies, the monthly publication of The National Board of Review, devotes the Editorial of its June-July issue to Hollywood's World View, which, the editor feels, is best represented by The Hollywood Quarterly and The Screen Writer. "The Screen Writer," says the editorial, "... is mainly devoted to the interests of the writing field but it too is full of enlightenment for those who won-

der why pictures are made as they are and not some other way. These magazines leave a double impression: of the high competence of contemporary film-makers, and of the magnitude of their problems. Also they leave in mind a notion that the modern inhabitants of Hollywood are citizens of the world. The journals will gain more respect for the industry among leaders of American opinion than a million dollars worth of 'public relations'."

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Y O U N E V E R C A N T E L L

EMMET LAVERY

WHAT'S your business?" asked the old-time politician, as he helped me prepare my nominating petitions in the race for Congress.

"Writer," I answered.

The old-timer looked up pityingly. "Never heard of a writer being elected to anything."

"Sorry," I explained. "That's what I am."

"Couldn't you think of something else?"

"Like what — author maybe?"

The old-timer thought it over for a moment. "No, that wouldn't be any better . . . too bad . . . you might have a chance with a good occupation!"

And so I filed my petitions for the Democratic nomination in the 16th Congressional District in the City of Angels . . . and so in the course of time I was defeated . . . and so it might now seem that the old-time politician had a curious gift of prophecy.

Nothing could be further from the truth. True, I lost the race by the slender margin of some 1,700 votes. On a breezy day when a big wind was blowing hard against all progressives in California, I was swept out to sea along with almost everyone else. Yet, when all the votes were counted, and all the comparisons were made, the general verdict seems to be that this was one of the best campaigns in the state. Why?

Well, I have a hunch. I have a hunch that I got as many votes as I

EMMET LAVERY, President of the Screen Writers' Guild, is the author of *The Magnificent Yankee*, one of last season's Broadway hits. It starts on a cross country tour in September.

did because I **was** a writer, because I have been trained most of my life to put ideas into words, and because as a result I was fairly well prepared for the platform give and take of a modern political campaign.

Nobody, I discovered, holds anything against a writer because he is a writer. Well, not for long anyway.

Why did I do it? Why does a fireman race to a fire, even after he has won his exempt fireman's certificate?

In my own case, I had served my apprenticeship and presumably had earned my exempt fireman's certificate. In my home town of Poughkeepsie, I was literally the boy alderman. At the ripe age of 26 I was elected president of the Board of Aldermen and served two terms in that office. For a fleeting moment or two I was even mayor of the town, usually on Thursdays — when the Mayor was in New York and it fell to my lot to kiss all the babies, makes all the speeches and gladhand the visiting firemen.

I was a Republican in those days — nearly everyone was born Republican in Dutchess County with the exception of Franklin Roosevelt, — and when the voters finally retired me from office, I figured that I was through with politics. I counted without the spirit of Franklin Roosevelt.

I had always been a Roosevelt Republican and, even while I was the Republican president of the Board of Aldermen of Poughkeepsie, I had helped Judge John E. Mack prepare the speech that nominated Franklin Roosevelt the first time at Chicago. When I came to California, I had no thought of re-entering politics. Since I had never voted for a Republican for President in my life, I kept right on voting for Roosevelt.

Then one fine night, when I was minding my own business, the telephone rang at home and the siren voice of a friend — yes, he was a writer, too — was saying: "We're shy a candidate in the 16th — why don't you run for Congress?"

Somehow, it never occurs to you that you can say no in Hollywood. People call you up and ask you to work for a cause. You say yes. People call you up and ask you to come to a committee meeting. You say yes. People call you up and ask you to run for Congress. Before I could say no, I was up to my neck in a red-hot political campaign, running on an all-out

New Deal platform as the grass-roots candidate of all the progressive clubs in the district.

All of a sudden, I was a complete Democrat for the first time in my life. I was carrying on right where I left off in that nominating speech for Roosevelt back in 1932.

The issues? Well, sometimes it was hard to see the issues for all the personalities involved. There were two of us competing for the Democratic nomination, five for the Republican nomination. Cross filing still being permitted in California, some of us had filed in both primaries. Absurd? Of course. But in a year when Governor Warren was making a strong — and, as events proved, very successful — bid to grab the Democratic nomination away from Bob Kenny, it was a wise candidate who rode both sides of the range.

Thanks to the League of Women Voters, it was possible on two occasions to round up most of the candidates and subject them to questions about their platforms. (I had a standing challenge to the principal contenders to meet me in an extended question-and-answer discussion, but it was never accepted.) The results on the whole were good, although some of the candidates were quite ingenious in avoiding the \$64 questions. The most ingenious of all was my immediate Democratic opponent, a city councilman; he came and posed for the group photograph of all candidates but vanished in the direction of “another meeting,” before the question period materialized.

In the Democratic primary the basic issue was “all the way with Roosevelt” as proposed by me, or “half way on everything” as favored by my opponent, the councilman. In the Republican primary, the battle was largely a personality battle between an old-time reactionary and a Willkie liberal. By an odd twist of fate, always appropriate in California politics, the Republicans chose the Willkie liberal and the Democrats nominated the “half way” candidate. The Republicans rejected the candidate who stood for military control of atomic research and restrictive covenants on real estate. The Democrats accepted the man who stood four-square in support of these two points of isolationism.

Too much naturally cannot be read into the outcome of these primary contests. Many ground swells were heaving in the background for both parties. The labor split, the Truman speech to Congress on the

railroad strike, the contest between Will Rogers, Jr., and Ellis Patterson for United States Senator, all made for great uncertainty among the voters. But the greatest uncertainty of all was provided by the man in the White House. Most of the voters in both parties, I discovered, were still voting Roosevelt. Alive or dead, he was still the great issue.

The only difference was that, with Roosevelt gone, the votes against him and his program mounted a little more quickly. In the absence of a dynamic successor in the White House, it was not so easy to crystallize one's hopes and resolve one's doubts in terms of one warm, vibrant personality.

And, as Bob Kenny so sagely pointed out, in such a moment the man in the street is inclined to freeze a bit — can even be forgiven for freezing. He's not sure what he wants to do. So — feeling that he is on his own and very much alone — he thinks it safer to retreat a little than to advance a little.



It wasn't a Hollywood campaign as such, although two major studios are located in the 16th District. Still, we met many faces and many issues long familiar on the Hollywood scene.

The I.A.T.S.E. and the professional Red-baiters were out in full force. James Kevin McGuinness and Howard Emmett Rogers once more heard the clarion call to action and even the one-time press agent of Willie Bioff took to the air to denounce me as a tool of Moscow.

It so happens that, as an Irishman originally trained for the law in Fordham Law School, I take my social conscience from the Gospels of the Apostles, not from the essays of Karl Marx. But this made no difference to the downtown labor boys who think that witch-hunting and democracy go hand in hand. I could point with pride to the fact that my father founded and was the first president of the New York State Federation of Labor, that he had fought the good fight with Samuel Gompers at the turn of the century when the going was really tough, and that in some small way I would like to carry on my father's battle for human rights. It all counted for nothing. I had the support of the C.I.O. and the Railway Brotherhoods and I was consequently a subversive of the first rank.

As the campaign moved along, the professional Red-baiters pre-

vailed upon a few Catholics to call upon the Church authorities in Los Angeles and to denounce me as a hypocrite and a fellow traveler. In support of their accusations, they offered as conclusive evidence: (a) my presidency of the Screen Writers' Guild; (b) my wartime chairmanship of the Hollywood Writers' Mobilization; (c) my membership in the Hollywood Independent Citizens' Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions. They also offered the "corroborative" testimony of men high in the film industry, men clearly intelligent enough to know better.

It was just about this time, appropriately enough, that I was in negotiation with the official theatre of Vatican City for the production of two plays: *The First Legion*, a drama of the Jesuits, and *Second Spring*, a dramatization of the life of Cardinal Newman.

Well, as the Jesuits used to say at Fordham Law School: **res ipsa loquitur**. Facts speak for themselves. And since the Church as such was not an issue in this campaign, nothing ever came of the slanderous attacks on my life as a Catholic. Nothing except a lovely bit of irony in the closing days of the campaign: in some precincts I WAS cut by several Catholics who were afraid I MIGHT be a Communist; in other precincts I was cut by a few Marxists who were quite sure I wasn't!

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Yes, it was quite a campaign. I hit my opponents with everything from Thomas Aquinas to Thomas Jefferson. I quoted passages from Papal encyclicals. I quoted decisions from Mr. Justice Holmes and Mr. Justice Brandeis. I argued for full employment and fair employment, for UNO and O.P.A., for F.E.P.C. and UNRRA, for low-cost housing and old-age security, for abolition of the poll-tax and dissolution of the Ku Klux Klan, for health insurance and cheap water power, for civilian control of atomic energy and for democratization of the armed forces. I fought for all of these things and I lost.

Would I do it again? Would a fish go back to water? I give you the words of William, the waiter, toward the end of Shaw's *You Never Can Tell*. The subject at issue is matrimony and William is explaining that "sometimes it turns out quite happy . . . quite comfortable, indeed, sir — from time to time."

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SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD, INC.

AFFILIATED WITH AUTHORS' LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.
1655 NO. CHEROKEE AVE., HOLLYWOOD 28, CALIFORNIA

S . W . G . B U L L E T I N

AMERICAN AUTHORS' AUTHORITY

Technical conditions beyond our control having made it necessary for us to go to press with this issue immediately following the SWG General Membership meeting of July 29, it is not yet possible this month to bring our readers any significant cross-section of national or international reactions to the plan proposed by James M. Cain and SWG's Original Material Committee in last month's major article, *An American Authors' Authority*.

Immediate local reactions to the plan are covered below.

We hope by our September issue to be able to gauge attitudes and assay opinions on the plan, on a national and international scale, and thereafter to devote a section of each issue to developments on the AAA front, until such time as the organization itself will have taken shape and be in a position to report its activities in its own name.

The ink was barely dry on our July issue, containing the proposal for copyright administration through an American Authors' Authority, and the Screen Writers' Guild had not yet met to discuss the matter — the first step toward bringing it to fruition, — when the local newspapers broke out with a rash of scare headlines.

LITERARY CZAR PROPOSED BY
FILM WRITERS (L. A. Examiner, Sat.,
July 27).

WRITERS PLAN DRASTIC MARKET-
ING CHANGE (L. A. Times, same date).

CAIN PROPOSES MERGER OF FOUR
GUILDS (Hollywood Citizen-News, same
date).

SCREEN WRITERS TO VOTE ON
PLAN FOR LITERARY CZAR (L. A.
Herald-Express, same date).

'IRON CURTAIN' BAN ON WRITERS

SOUGHT (Valley Times, No. Hollywood,
same date).

PLANS FOR CZAR OF WRITERS
STIRS (sic!) TEMPEST IN FILMLAND
(L. A. Examiner, Sun., July 28).

FILM WRITERS/Vote Due Tonight on
Literary Czar (L. A. Herald-Express,
Mon., July 29).

WRITERS SPLIT ON CAIN PLAN
(L. A. Examiner, same date).

A VOTE FOR JOE STALIN (Holly-
wood Reporter, same date).

FILM WRITERS VOTE FOR SALES COMBINE (Valley Times, Tues., July 30).

FILM WRITERS' GUILD VOTES FOR CLOSED AGENCY (L. A. Times, same date).

Against these, the stories carried in Daily Variety, the Los Angeles Daily News, Hollywood Press-Times, Hollywood Sun (which headed it: STORY TSAR OVER 4 INDUSTRIES SOUGHT IN AUTHORS' REVOLT), and the People's Daily World (AUTHOR PROTECTION VOTED) were eminently fair. The radio commentators, on the other hand, described the plan as creating a "Petrillo of literature."

SWG Meeting

Commenting on the early scareheads that heralded our meeting, President Emmet Lavery opened the General Membership Meeting of July 29 with the remark that the papers had generally been terrified at what they termed a "czar" who was to be the "tough mugg" at the head of AAA, and then turned around and accused us of being Reds, which, Lavery felt, was the first time he had ever heard of Reds wanting a Czar.

The meeting was attended by some 600 (including associate SWG members, visiting Authors' League members, and active SWG members). 355 active SWG members were present and cast the following vote on the AAA proposal: 343 for, 7 against (8 were counted originally, but one member later requested the Guild Secretary to change his vote), and 5 abstentions.

In addition to his earlier quip, Lavery pointed out that very similar headlines (which he read) had greeted the Guild's first requests for a Guild shop 10 years ago—yet the point had been won and none of the dire results forecast had come to pass. Ring Lardner, Jr., then told of the inception of the AAA plan through the SWG Original Material Committee, and read the resolution which was adopted by the vote given above. Morris Cohn outlined some of the legal points involved; Howard Estabrook gave a report

on how a comparable plan functions in France; and James M. Cain spoke at length in explanation and support of the plan as printed in the magazine.

SWG Resolution

After fulsome discussion from the floor (less heated, however, than might have been anticipated), the following resolution, as presented by Lardner, was passed with the 7 dissenting votes recorded:

"That the Screen Writers' Guild endorses in principle the working out with the other Guilds of the Authors' League of America a plan for the establishment of an American Authors' Authority along the general lines prepared by James M. Cain in conjunction with the Original Material Committee, and that the Executive Board is instructed to proceed, in cooperation with the rest of the League, to draft a specific program to achieve this purpose, which program shall be subject to ratification at a future general membership meeting."

Amendment

Stressing that he felt that no issue of control of material was involved, but that some members might wish to have their fears allayed in this connection, Edwin Blum presented the following amendment, seconded by John Wexley, which was passed unanimously:

"That there be no discrimination in the rights or treatment accorded by AAA to any piece of written material by reason of its content."

A motion to prohibit AAA from requiring its members to be or become members in good standing of their respective Guilds was voted down overwhelmingly. The consensus was that, while Cain's plan calls for such obligatory membership as a means of strengthening the AAA through the Guilds and vice versa, it was too early to commit the as-yet-only-projected AAA to a stand which could necessarily be determined only on the basis of the objective conditions surrounding its becoming a functioning organism.

RELATIONS WITH FRANCE

Following the appeals of the French film workers recorded in Henri Jeanson's article and the additional documentation in the Bulletin section of last month's Screen Writer, the July 29 meeting heard a report of background and related conditions, by Director of Publications Harold J. Salemson, after which Lester Cole presented the following resolution:

"That the Screen Writers' Guild, in answer to the appeal of the French film workers, express its opinion of the French-American Film Agreement and ask our State Department to investigate the possibility of renegotiating this Agreement so that the French film industry can survive."

This resolution was passed unanimously by the SWG membership present, the first Hollywood action in support of the French workers.

Further Action

It has been reported to the Executive Board, and sanctioned by them, that Salemson, acting as an individual, will communicate this SWG resolution and his background report to other guilds, unions and prominent individuals in the film industry, calling them together in a meeting to discuss the Franco-American Film Agreement, and thereby taking the initiative in forming a Hollywood Committee on International Film Agreements, which may make film workers' voices heard as well as those of the producers.

DECORATIONS

Lt. (jg) Budd W. Schulberg, whose account of *The Celluloid Nose* heads this issue, on Apr. 3 last was given the following commendation by Brig. Gen. John Magruder, U. S. Army: "For meritorious service rendered the Office of Strategic Services and this unit from 15 July 1945 to 25 Nov. 1945. Lieutenant (jg) Schulberg, a member of the Field Photographic Branch, with tireless devotion to duty, great vision and initiative, directed the collection, under the most difficult conditions, of vast quantities of photographic

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evidence of German war guilt and crimes against humanity. This evidence, which includes tens of millions of feet of motion picture film, not only assisted materially in the prosecution of the major war criminals but also has tremendous value to the United States Government intelligence and research agencies for the establishment of a permanent photographic record of European political and military developments during the past two critical decades. By this commendation, Lieutenant (jg) Schulberg is hereby authorized to wear the Army Commendation Ribbon by direction of the Secretary of War."

Another SWG member recently decorated for his wartime service is M/Sgt. Lester Koenig, who served as assistant to Lt. Col. William Wyler in the production of the wartime documentaries, *Memphis Belle* and *Thunderbolt*. Koenig, who contributed *Back from the Wars* to *The Screen Writer* for August 1945, was awarded the Bronze Star for his outstanding achievement during the war. He is now back in Hollywood, working as a writer and special assistant to Wyler on his current film. By coincidence, Koenig and Schulberg were college classmates and started their Hollywood writing careers together.

EDITORIAL ADDITION

Beginning with our next issue, Harris Gable will join the Editorial Committee of *The Screen Writer*. Widely experienced in the factual film field as well as in non-motion picture writing, Gable contributed an article on factual films, *The Film Foundling*, to our March issue, and was responsible for the Index to our Vol. I, published in May.

CHECK THIS CREDIT

Sole Screenplay credit for Robert Stephen Brode on *Sing While You Dance*, in *The Screen Writer* for June, listed this production as being a Twentieth Century-Fox film. The film was made by Columbia, and all individuals and offices keeping a file of these credits are requested to make that correction in the June issue.

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COMMUNICATION

WRITERS' WAR

Charles Grayson, well-known screen writer, novelist and anthologist, whose *Angel Town* has just been published, tells of some of his wartime experiences in the following report, which may in part answer the question raised last month in a letter from Jay E. Gordon, as to why writers are not credited for their wartime service films and other contributions:

The originator of the observation that wherever you go you take yourself with you soon had a disciple in one brand new lieutenant who in 1942 set out from Burbank to help make pictures for the Army. During the ensuing four years I was to learn that no matter where the job, I would find familiars who also had changed their clothes and taken a cut, but who retained literary habits.

The discovery started immediately upon my arrival at Wright Field, in Ohio. At the Training Film Production Laboratory, already there or to come, were Mel Baker, Dave Matthews, Arthur Strawn, Ted Reeves, Ben Grauman Kohn, Ivan Goff, George Owen, Charlie Lederer, Rian James, Jerry Sackheim, Mauri Grashin, Lynn Riggs, Herb Stein, Arnold Belgard, Arthur Orloff — backed by such civilian scribes as had managed to tear themselves away from Hollywood to give a hand on the desperately-needed scripts: Earl Snell, Everett and Devery Freeman, Milton Lazarus. . . .

Subsequent tours of duty turned up more of the ink-stained fraternity. Carl Winston's beaming face shone in Florida, Al Duffy's in Texas. An oddly saluting sergeant in California proved to be George Oppenheimer. Leonard Spigelgass was in Washington when I was there, Charlie MacArthur in New York, and Dick Carroll on a train between. Gordon Rigby was on the plane to Scotland.

Overseas it was the same. Joel Sayre was in Algiers, Oliver Garrett in Tunis, and I crossed paths with Bob Riskin in Marrakesch — three instances of writers not in uniform who put in valuable hitches.

In the line, Italy became more supportable when through the mud John Huston came shambling. With him was

Eric Ambler of the British Photographic, loaned by his CO, David Niven, to be my opposite number in a combined Anglo-American record of the campaign.

This project ultimately took me to London, where George Stevens led the way to a foodeasy which might have been the backroom of Musso-Frank's, dotted as it was with members of his unit like Irwin Shaw, Irving Reis, Gene Solow and Bill Saroyan, about to engage upon the book so insulting to William Saroyan. Later, in a cellar-club run by Alwyn Vaughan of the English documentaries with the support of Burgess Meredith, there was such a racket as could emanate only from Dick Macaulay. Around London, but with duties away from film, also were Cy Bartlett, Laurence Stallings and Steve Avery.

Back in New York, at the Signal Corps Photographic Center, were more besuited Guildsmen, coming and going on missions, creating the essential framework for all those thousands of so-vital reels which poured from the plant: Dick Maibaum, Jesse Lasky, Charlie Kaufman, Ben Roberts, Tony Veiller, Dick Blake, Ted Cox, Ted Geisel, Frank Coen, John Meehan, John Wexley, Sidney Kingsley, Claude Binyon, James Gow, Arnaud D'Usseau, Dan Taradash, Carl Foreman, Don Ettlinger — and on from the First Motion Picture Unit at Culver City, Norman Krasna, John Mahin, Ed Gilbert and Jerry Chodorov. . . .

In Washington for a joint short subject with the Navy, I found a file of blue suits topped by recognizable faces squinting over typewriters and from Gene Markey's braid — Collier Young, Clay Adams, Dick Carlson, Julie Epstein, Paul Jarrico, Bob Taplinger. In nearby offices, Phil Dunne, Sam Engel and Tom Kilpatrick were making propaganda films for South America. OSS had Budd Schulberg, Peter Viertel, Ian Hunter — while over at Quantico Leonard Lee, Milton Sperling and Richard Brooks were writing on the Marines' part of that vast effort by which all branches of the Services were instructed and informed by those who did their part with celluloid weapons — those who, for me, made it seem that I'd never left home.

— Charles Grayson.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

AMERICAN AUTHORS' AUTHORITY

As usual, Frank Scully is one of the first to come forward with a comment, a letter sent in July 29, the very night of the discussion of AAA at the Guild meeting. He writes:

Regarding An American Authors' Authority as published under the name of James M. Cain in the current Screen Writer, this Declaration of Dependence is so true as to terrify all but believers in slavery. Never was a brief more progressively depressing in its revelations. Those who believe in strong government and those who believe in weak government must both agree that writers who will accept this sort of overall peonage one more day have betrayed their God-given gifts of creation. I favor immediate and complete acceptance of the American Authors' Authority.

Stuart N. Lake, an Authors' League member in San Diego, phoned the same day, upon receipt of his copy of *The Screen Writer* for July, to state his regrets at being unable to attend the SWG meeting and to go on record as being in full agreement with the AAA plan, as are several other professional writers in San Diego with whom he has consulted.

Nominations?

Martin Field writes in to say:

After polling some Screen Writers' Guild members as to whom they would recommend to head the AAA, I think Seymour Bennett has come up with two excellent candidates: Chester Bowles, Gov. Ellis Arnall.

Precedents

Jay Leyda calls our attention to Page 112 of Mark Twain, *Business Man*, edited by Samuel Charles Webster and just published by Little, Brown. That page carries a letter from Twain, in Buffalo, to his family, dated Mar. 26, 1870, reading:

"I am going to edit a ten-page department in the *Galaxy Magazine*. The berth is exceedingly easy and the salary liberal. I am to RENT the matter to them, not sell it—and so I can use it in book

form afterward without sharing the proceeds with them. . ."

Our attention is also called to an article by Helen Colton on Edgar Rice Burroughs, in the current *Magazine Digest*. She writes:

"Burroughs is reputed to have earned over ten million dollars from his jungle athlete (Tarzan), via books, movies, radio programs, newspaper comic strips in more than 200 newspapers in half-a-dozen countries, and such by-products as bread, ice cream cups, sweaters, knives, toys, games, schoolbags, notebooks, paint-books, bows and arrows, gum, candy, masks, jungle costumes, pencils.

"Three million of these earnings came from the use of the character of Tarzan in 23 movies. And Burroughs recently contracted with Sol Lesser Productions for Tarzan films for the next 20 years, at a fancy RENTAL of around four million dollars. The secret of Burroughs' financial success is that he never sells his character; he merely leases Tarzan for a specific length of time and a specific purpose or product. Since 1923, when he incorporated himself, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc., has been sole owner and exploiter of Tarzan and his by-products."

GUILDS FILM LIBRARY

Daniel M. Mendelowitz, Associate Professor of Art and Education at Stanford University, comments:

I have just read with much interest the article on A Guilds Film Library by Charles A. Page in the July issue of your magazine.

I have been giving a lecture course on the motion picture at Stanford University for the past eight years. The course outlines the development of the motion picture, discusses the potentialities and aesthetics of the medium, and then analyzes current trends and techniques as exemplified in the more original movies.

As one who has been teaching in this field, I would like to see the development of such a Guilds Film Library on the West Coast. I have been using films from The Museum of Modern Art film library, sup-

plemented by what I can get from exchanges that stock 16-mm. programs, for my course. However, a great many of the best American and foreign films produced in the past fifteen years are very hard to secure.

I should think the Screen Writers' Guild, in cooperation with the industry, might be able to build up a relatively complete library for the use of serious students and critics. Mr. Page implied in his article that membership in the library would be available to interested individuals and groups. Might I recommend that the privilege of renting films be accorded members and that membership be made

available to college groups (and probably to interested high school groups)?

The Screen Writer audience may be interested in knowing what kind of students enroll in a university course on the motion picture. The chief enrollment comes from students of the drama, literature, journalism, and art: would-be movie critics, would-be actors, and would-be scenic and costume designers. A more limited number of students elect the course for its general cultural value; in other words, because they have always been interested in movies.

I hope you go ahead with the film library project.

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NEWS NOTES

★ The N. Y. Museum of Modern Art's current series, Highlights of the Documentary Film, has already included *Mosana*, *H-2 O*, *Ten Days That Shook the World*, *Rien que les heures*, *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City*, *Earth in Song*, *The Wave*, *Easter Island*, *Song of Ceylon*, *L'amitié noire*, *The River*, and *The City*. Remaining programs of the daily series are: Aug. 12-15, Luis Bunuel's *Land Without Bread* and Joris Ivens' *The Spanish Earth*, with commentary by Ernest Hemingway; Aug. 16-18, Ivens' *Power and the Land*, with commentary by Stephen Vincent Benét, and Willard Van Dyke's *Valley Town*; Aug. 19-22, Pare Lorentz' *The Fight For Life*; Aug. 23-25, selection of instructional films: *Die Stierennen Wunder von Naumburg*, Van Eyck's "Adoration of the Lamb," *La lettre*, *The Transfer of Power*, *Sweeney Steps Out*, *Cold Front*, and *The Grain That Built a Hemisphere*; Aug. 26-29, *The Bridge* (Van Dyke and Ben Maddow), *High Plain* (Julien Bryan and Jules Bucher) and *High Over the Borders* (Irving Lerner); Aug. 30-Sept. 1, OWI films: *A Better Tomorrow* (Alexander Hackenschmied-Hammid), *The Cunningham Story* (Helen Grayson and Larry Madison), *The Capital Story* (Irving Jacoby

and Henwar Rodakiewicz), and *The Window Cleaner* (Bucher and Joseph March); Sept. 2-5, Van Dyke's *Northwest U. S. A.*, *Tuesday in November* (John Houseman and John Berry), *The Autobiography of a Jeep* (Joseph Krumgold and Gene Fowler, Jr.), *The Library of Congress* (Lerner and Hackenschmied); Sept. 6-8, *A Place to Live* (Lerner and Muriel Rukeyser), *When We Build Again* (Ralph Bond, British), *Housing in Scotland* (Gilbert Gunn, British); Sept. 9-12, *What's Happened to Sugar?* (David Flaherty), *Hidden Hunger* (Krumgold and Rodakiewicz), *World of Plenty* (Paul Rotha and Eric Knight, British); Sept. 13-15, *The Battle of San Pietro* (John Huston), *The Last Shot* (John Ferno), and *The Pale Horseman* (Jacoby).

★ Duell, Sloan & Pearce announce for publication, on Aug. 28, *Okay for Sound*, edited by Frederick M. Thrasher, a picture and text history of sound films, to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the talkies (being exploited from here to breakfast by Warner Bros.' advertising and publicity departments) . . . The same firm also announces that Eleanor Roosevelt has written the foreword to *As He Saw It*, son Elliott's intimate account

of the late President through the war years. . . . The Bryant Foundation, Los Angeles (737 N. Edgemont St.), has brought out *Peace Key*, by John M. Weatherwax, a well-documented compendium of the basic documents of world history of the immediate past, with conclusions that present a strong plea for Big 3 Unity as the key to world peace. Conclusions: definitely progressive; execution: highly competent. . .

★ SWG member David O. Selznick contributes to the August issue of *The Negro Digest* an article entitled *Negro Lobby in Hollywood*, expressing himself in favor of increased and better representation of the Negro in films, with particular emphasis on the constructive short subject which can present the accomplishments of outstanding Negroes, and advocating the appointment of a leading Negro, "preferably a writer, a diplomat, and an open-minded man without prejudice," as a lobbyist in Hollywood, to present the case for the Negro, advise on subjects touching his minority group and "bit by bit secure the objectives" for which Negroes have "so long and valiantly strived". . . . Orson Welles is attracting increasing attention with his weekly Sunday night broadcasts (1:15 PM, Eastern Time, re-broadcast at 10:15 PM, PST, over ABC), due to which his listeners are referring to him as the "conscience of America." His tale of Sunday night July 28, the story of the Negro ex-GI who was viciously blinded by a Southern policeman, and his promise to "Officer X" that he would hound him to the ends of the earth, will linger a long time with all those who heard it. . . .

★ SWG member Michael Blankfort has two books slated for publication within the coming year: *The Widow Makers*, a novel, will be brought out by Simon & Schuster in the fall, and a biography of Evans Carlson, tentatively titled *Carlson and the Raiders*, will come out under the imprint of Little, Brown in January.

★ Robert Stephen Brode has in recent weeks had two original radio plays, *Three Times a Sinner* and *Bright Horizon*, on *The Whistler* series over CBS, and *Five Star Mysteries* have accepted his detective novel, *Murder Goes Calypso*, for a paperback edition. He is doing final editing on the book now.

★ Milton M. Raison has been advised that Denis Archer, Ltd., of London, will bring out a British edition of his novel, *The Gay Mortician*, this fall; the American edition was published by Murray & Gee, of Hollywood, who announce Raison's next, *No Weeds for the Widow*, on their fall list. Also due to appear at the end of the summer is a French translation of one of Raison's Tony Woolrich detective series, *Nobody Loves a Dead Man*, to be published by Les éditions Diderot.

★ The Gagnon Co., of Los Angeles, formerly known especially for its *Plot Genie* series, has launched a series of novels, to be selected, it is reported, from manuscripts written by writers developed within the motion picture industry. First of the books, out this month, is *Sheila*, by Robert St. Clair. Next announced is *Next Year's Harvest*, by Donya Corleigh Kane.

★ SWG member Everett Wile has taken a management-lease on the El Patio Theatre (formerly the Hollywood Women's Club), 7080 Hollywood Blvd., where he and his partner will produce their own theatrical ventures as well as making the house available to other producers interested in sub-leasing it. During the day, the El Patio is used as a radio broadcasting studio for audience shows.

★ James Roosevelt, whose article, From "Do It Now" to "Well Done," appeared in our last issue, has been elected California State Chairman of the Democratic Party. To devote his full time to this position and his daily broadcasts, he has resigned from the position he held with the Independent Citizens' Committee of the Arts, Sciences & Professions.

SWG members are urged to bring to the attention of The Screen Writer production of their plays, publication of their novels and stories, or other non-motion picture literary activities, for listing in these News Notes.

★ **MARKETS** — Leonard Fields, general manager for Shepard Traube's Broadway production of *Angel Street*, and financially interested in *Call Me Mister*, is in Hollywood for the summer, reading scripts for his own future productions in New York. He is interested in seeing any type of play suitable for Broadway production, and may be reached at CRestview 1-4766 . . . Joseph B. Polonsky, of the Hollywood Press Syndicate, 6605 Hollywood Blvd. (Hillside 8838), is interested in handling foreign translation rights to novels, especially mystery and detective stories. He has outlets in Scandinavia, Czechoslovakia and other countries, and will be glad to hear from any published authors whose foreign rights are available. . .

★ **FOREIGN ACTIVITIES** — The leading Dutch weekly, *Goene Amsterdammer*, has carried a translation of extensive extracts from The Soviet Film Industry, Konstantin Simonov's discussion with Hollywood writers, printed in our June issue. Simon Koster, New York correspondent for the *Amsterdam* magazine, did the translation . . . Kino, of Prague, has published translations of *Hearstian Criteria for Movie Critics*, by Robert Shaw, and *In Defense of the Ghouls*, by Curt Siodmak, printed respectively in *The Screen Writer* for last September and February. Both were translated by Jiri Pick, as the first results of the agreement we are negotiating with The Czechoslovak Motion Picture Publishing House for an exchange of material. . . . Discussions are also going on toward the setting up of regular sales outlets and subscription agencies for *The Screen Writer* in France, Palestine and Lebanon. Interest in the magazine abroad, on all scores, we are

happy to report, has exceeded our fondest expectations. Subscriptions in the British Empire, particularly, are increasing by leaps and bounds, and plans are underway for a British edition in the not-too-distant future. . . .

★ On Sat., July 20, the editors of *The Hollywood Quarterly* and the Editorial Committee of *The Screen Writer* were hosts to Lao Sheh (or Lau Shaw), author of the best-selling *Rickshaw Boy*, and Wan Chia-pao, distinguished Chinese playwright, at the home of Sondra and Jay Gorney. Almost 50 persons, members of the two boards, other SWG members and their wives, attended and heard an exciting description of the Chinese theatre, old and new, the status of the film industry in China, and the situation of writers. In addition to the very true cultural experience of acquiring first-hand from these two delightful writers and equally delightful speakers an insight into technical problems in the Far East — a discussion which could have gone on far into the night, for barely the surface was scratched, — the Hollywood audience was apprised of the appalling material conditions faced by our Chinese fellow-craftsmen. Financial assistance spontaneously offered from the floor was accepted by the visitors, with the proviso that it would be held until they could work out the best way of transmitting the funds to needy Chinese writers, a matter for which no machinery has been set up, since this was not a basic aim of their visit to this country, essentially devoted to study and furtherance of cultural exchange. A tentative committee was formed on the spot by Mr. & Mrs. Robert Presnell, Sr., Mr. & Mrs. Jay Leyda, Miss Sonja Dahl, of the Institute of Pacific Relations (who arranged for the reception to be held); they will make announcement soon of what steps have been taken to bring organized aid to Chinese writers. Messrs. Sheh and Wan have promised us a detailed communication on the situation of Chinese writers today, which will appear in our next issue, and will follow that up with a more extensive article of constructive counsel concerning American

films and their relations with the Far East.

★ California Labor School (216 Market St., San Francisco 11) has, as Educational Director Holland Roberts writes in, "added an expanded writers' course to its curriculum" to afford writers "knowledge of labor's history and purposes, struggles and methods" and "contact with laboring men and their problems." The school is recognized under the G. I. Bill, and its next semester, running fifteen weeks, starts Sept. 3. Courses in creative writing include one on that subject by Reginald Louis White, Journalism

I & II by Gail Hazard and Tom Weber, two Writers' Seminars conducted by Leon Alexander, Holland Roberts and Isobel Cerney, Writers' Workshop by Ruth Witt-Diamant, and Readers and Writers Today by E. Bogoslan and Isobel Cerney. In addition to these and numerous other courses offered, the School has a series of Full-time Courses of Study, particularly designed for veterans, and covering Labor-Social Sciences-Journalism-Writing, Labor Journalism, Creative Writing, Writers' Seminar, Labor Organization, and Industrial Arts. Interested persons should apply to the School at the address above, with veterans sending their queries to Allan Rosenfield, Veterans' Director.

SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD STUDIO CHAIRMEN

COLUMBIA — Melvin Levy; Ted Thomas, alternate.

M-G-M — Isobel Lennart; Sonya Levien, Marion Parsonnet, Osso Van Eyss, Polly James, William Ludwig, stewards; Robert Andrews, Paul Wellman, Arch Whitehouse, alternates.

PARAMOUNT — Abe Polonsky; Robert Lees, alternate.

R-K-O — Arthur Ross; Bess Taffel, alternate.

REPUBLIC — John Butler; Betty Burbridge, alternate.

20th CENTURY FOX — Valentine Davies; Wanda Tuchock, alternate.

UNIVERSAL — Jerry Warner.

WARNER BROS. — Randal MacDougall.

FACTS & FIGURES

The charts presented on the following two pages are the first in a series prepared for the Screen Writers' Guild, by the National Labor Bureau of San Francisco, under the direction of Henry P. Melnikow.

These charts will cover not only profits, corporate income and related figures, but also breakdowns of employment of writers in the industry, as to salary, length of assignment and other pertinent conditions.

In addition to being used by SWG in its present and future negotiations with the studios, many of these charts will form the basis of analytical articles to be published in future issues of the magazine, and will doubtless be referred to by

authors of still other articles. While specific statistics will be repeated within the text of articles dealing with them, readers are urged to keep these charts on file, as basic background material in connection with such articles as may later refer to them.

The information in the two tables published herewith is derived from Moody's Manual of Investments, American and Foreign — Industrial Securities, 1945, and Moody's Investors' Service. Only seven major studios are studied in this compilation, due to the fact that there is no comparable data available for Republic Pictures Corporation:

**COMPARISON NET PROFITS AFTER ALL CHARGES
(INCLUDING INCOME TAX PAYMENTS)
OF SEVEN MAJOR MOTION PICTURE STUDIOS
1940-1946**

Studio	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
Columbia	\$ 512,186	\$ 552,744	\$ 1,611,659	\$ 1,802,280	\$ 2,055,835	\$ 1,945,168
Loews, Inc.	8,654,220	11,032,107	11,809,723	13,422,853	14,517,256	12,913,369
Paramount	6,402,131	9,206,242	13,125,437	14,584,821	14,743,106	15,425,452
R.K.O.	-988,987	1,003,491	640,312	6,912,497	5,206,378	6,031,085
20th Century-Fox	-517,337	4,921,927	10,609,785	10,901,769	12,480,492	12,746,467
Universal Pict. ¹	2,232,805	2,341,202	2,806,952	3,759,968	3,412,701	3,910,928
Warner Bros.	2,747,473	5,429,303	8,555,000	8,238,000	6,953,000	9,901,563
TOTAL NET FOR YEAR —						
7 STUDIOS	19,042,491	34,487,016	49,158,868	59,622,188	59,368,768	62,874,032
Index Numbers . . .						
1940 equals 100	181.10	258.15	313.10	311.76	330.17	

% Increase Net Profits — 7 Studios — 1945 over 1940 — 230.2%

¹/Universal Pictures Co., Inc. was subsidiary of Universal Corp. until June 1943 when the two merged under the name of Universal Pictures Co., Inc. Above figures for prior to 1943 reflect net profits of Universal Corp.

NET PROFITS AFTER TAXES

	First Fiscal Period			% Increase	
	1944	1945	1946	1946 over 1944	1946 over 1945
Columbia	\$1,490,000 ¹	\$1,380,000 ²	\$2,315,000 ³	55.4	67.8
Loews, Inc.	7,442,698 ⁴	6,768,496 ⁵	8,952,067 ⁶	20.3	32.3
Paramount	3,814,000 ⁸	4,007,000 ⁷	11,587,000 ⁷	203.8	189.2
R.K.O	1,557,404 ⁹	1,141,044 ⁹	3,675,953 ⁹	136.0	222.2
20th-Fox	3,186,303 ¹¹	2,855,485 ¹⁰	6,241,954 ¹⁰	95.9	118.5
Universal	1,833,945 ¹²	2,064,175 ¹³	2,576,405 ¹⁴	40.9	24.8
Warners	3,492,125 ¹⁵	4,605,088 ¹⁶	9,125,532 ¹⁷	161.3	98.1

Range of Increases First Fiscal Period
1946 over 1944 - **20.3% to 203.8%**

Range of Increases First Fiscal Period
1946 over 1945 - **24.8% to 222.2%**

1/ Consolidated earnings, 39 weeks ending 3-25-44

2/ Consolidated earnings, 39 weeks ending 3-31-45

3/ Consolidated earnings, 39 weeks ending 3-30-46

4/ 28 weeks to 3-16-44

5/ 28 weeks to 3-15-45

6/ 28 weeks to 3-14-46

7/ 3 months to 3-30-45, 46

8/ 3 months to 3-31-44

9/ 13 weeks to 3-31-44, 45, 46

10/ 13 weeks to 3-31-45, 46

11/ 13 weeks to 3-25-44

12/ 26 weeks to April 29, 1944

13/ 26 weeks to April 28, 1945

14/ 26 weeks to May 4, 1946

15/ Consolidated earnings, 6 months to 2-26-44

16/ Consolidated earnings, 6 months to 2-24-45

17/ Consolidated earnings, 6 months to 3- 2-46

THE MANUSCRIPT MARKET

LISTING THE AUTHORS, TITLES AND CHARACTER
OF LITERARY MATERIAL RECENTLY ACQUIRED BY
THE MOTION PICTURE STUDIOS

In identifying the form of literary material acquired, the following descriptions are used:

Book, a published or unpublished full-length work of non-fiction; **Book of Stories**, a collection of published stories or articles; **Novel**, a work of fiction of book length, whether published, in proof or in manuscript; **Novelette**, the same, but of lesser length; **Original**, any material written expressly for the screen; **Play**, produced or unproduced work in theatrical form; **Published Story**, a published short story or article; **Radio Script**, material originally written for radio production; **Screenplay**, material already in shooting script form; **Short Story**, short fiction still in manuscript; **Treatment**, preliminary screen adaptation of material already published in some other form.

MARCH 15 TO JULY 1, 1946

COLUMBIA

BOYCE DeGAW (with Jerry Horwin), No Place for a Lady, Original
FRANCES EISENBERG (see Ketti Frings)
KETTI FRINGS, Come Dream With Me, Original based upon Frances Eisenberg's Published Story, Free Surprise Gift
OLIVER H. P. GARRETT (with Edwin Justus Mayer), The Turn of the Century, Original
JERRY HORWIN (with Boyce DeGaw), No Place for a Lady, Original
EDWARD HUEBSCH, Tonight's the Night, Original
EDWIN JUSTUS MAYER (with Oliver H. P. Garrett), The Turn of the Century, Original
BARRY PEROWNE, Blind Spot, Published Story (Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine)
TOM REED, Double Crossroads, Original
EMILE C. TEPPERMAN, Till Death Do Us Part, Radio Script

EAGLE-LION

ROBERT B. CHURCHILL, Hell on Wheels, Original
WILLIAM O'FARRELL (see Louis Solomon)
THORNTON SARGENT (with Tony Sargent), Hot Rod, Original
TONY SARGENT (with Thornton Sargent), Hot Rod, Original
LOUIS SOLOMON, Repeat Performance, Screenplay from Published Novel by William O'Farrell

INTERNATIONAL

BETTY MacDONALD, The Egg and I, Novel
SOMERSET MAUGHAM, Ashenden, Book of Stories
CARL ZUCKMAYER, Delusion, Novel

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT, Secret Garden, Novel
MARGARET CRAVEN, The Spindle Age, Published Story
JOSEPH FIELDS (with Marion Fields), Untitled, Original
MARION FIELDS (with Joseph Fields), Untitled, Original
HAROLD GREENE (with Joe May), Finale, Original
EDWARD HOLSTIUS, The Day Before Yesterday, Novel
ROLAND KIBBEE, Gentle Brutus, Original
GREGORY LA CAVA, Life Is for the Loving, Original
JOE MAY (with Harold Greene), Finale, Original
MORLEY ROBERTS, The Anticipator, Published Story
HAROLD SHUMATE (with Frank Waldman), Gun Glory, Original
FRED WAKEMAN, The Hucksters, Novel
FRANK WALDMAN (with Harold Shumate), Gun Glory, Original

MONOGRAM

DONALD BARRY, This Guy Gideon, Original
PHILIP CONWAY, Prison Doctor, Original
OLIVER DRAKE, Rainbow Over the Rockies, Original
CULLEN EPSY, Don't Gamble With Strangers, Original
STEVE FISHER, The Hunted, Original
I Wouldn't Be In Your Shoes, Original
MAURICE SANDOZ, The Maze, Published Book
JERRY WARNER, Bringing Up Father, Original
CORNELL WOOLRICH, Cocaine, Published Story

PARAMOUNT

GERALD ADAMS, Dragnet, Original
HOUSTON BRANCH, The Big Haircut, Unpublished Novel
KENNETH FEARING, The Big Clock, Novel
LEWIS FOSTER, The Wonder of It All, Original
ELIZABETH SANXAY HOLDING, The Innocent Mrs. Duff, Novel

REPUBLIC

FLOYD T. ALDERSON, The Johnson County Invasion, Original
M. D. BUCKNER (with Elizabeth Meehan and Angela Stewart), They Borrowed The Night, Original
MARSHALL GARRETT, Sheriff of Rogue River, Original
ELIZABETH MEEHAN (with M. D. Buckner and Angela Stewart), They Borrowed The Night, Original
EDWARD E. ROSE, Slippery McGee, Play
ANGELA STEWART (with Elizabeth Meehan and M. D. Buckner), They Borrowed The Night, Original

RKO

DOROTHY ATLAS (with Anthony Mann), Flight, Original
WILLIAM CORCORAN, Trail Street, Novel
DICK IRVING HYLAND, Memory of Love, Original
ANTHONY MANN (with Dorothy Atlas), Flight, Original
LEO MITTLER, The Flowers of Evil, Original
LEONARD PRASKINS (with Wanda Tuchock), Out of All Time, Original
WANDA TUCHOCK (with Leonard Praskins), Out of All Time, Original

TWENTIETH CENTURY-FOX

ANTHONY ABBOTT, The Perfect Case, Published Story
HENRY JAMES, The Turn of the Screw, Novel
MARGERY SHARP, Britannia Mews, Novel
FRANK YERBY, Foxes of Harrow, Novel

UNIVERSAL

REX BEACH, The Michigan Kid, Published Story
KENNETH CARTER, Desi, Original
MART COLE, Sweet and Deadly, Original
JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD, Back to God's Country, Published Story
RICHARD LANDAU, Challenge in the Night, Original
DON MARTIN, Once Upon a Crime, Original Screenplay
CHRISTOPHER MORLEY, Kathleen, Novel

(Mark Hellinger)

PHILIP G. EPSTEIN, Mistakes Will Happen, Original
ROBERT PATTERSON, Eight Men, Original
DON TRACY, Criss-Cross, Novel

(Walter Wanger)

RUFUS KING, The Secret Beyond the Door, Novelette (published in Red Book)

VANGUARD

FRANK BAKER, Miss Hargreaves, Book
ROBERT HICHENS, The Paradine Case, Novel
SIDNEY SHELDON, Suddenly It's Spring, Original

WARNER BROTHERS

KENNETH EARL, Whiplash, Original
STEVE FISHER, Winter Kill, Novel and Play
C. S. FORESTER, African Queen, Novel
ABEL GREEN (with Joe Laurie, Jr.) Barbary Host, Original
JOHN KAFKA, Apple Orchard, Novel Outline
GOSTA LARRSON, Ships in the River, Novel
JOE LAURIE, JR. (with Abel Green), Barbary Host, Original
ROBERT LINDNER, Rebel Without a Cause, Book
PHILIP WYLIE, Night Unto Night, Novel



NEXT MONTH & THEREAFTER

- LAO SHEH & C. P. WAN • WRITERS IN CHINA
JOHN DOHM • THE RETURN OF A RATIONALIST
RICHARD HUBLER • OPINION AND THE MOTION PICTURE
DALTON TRUMBO • THE CRAFT OF THE SCREEN WRITER
PHILIP DUNNE & M. WM. POMERANCE •
• MINIMUM ANNUAL WAGE — YES OR NO?

And further articles by LEWIS AMSTER, HUGO BUTLER, MORRIS E. COHN, MARTIN FIELD, SHERIDAN GIBNEY, LEWIS HERMAN, ARTHUR KOBER, VLADIMIR POZNER, ROBERT ROSSEN, HAROLD J. SALEMSON, RICHARD SCHWEIZER, ARTHUR STRAWN, LOUIS ADAMIC, GEORGE COREY, F. HUGH HERBERT, WILLIAM H. MOORING, WILLIAM E. OLIVER, MAURICE RAPF, EVERETT WILE, and others.

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the SCREEN WRITER

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the **SCREEN WRITER**

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SEPTEMBER 1946

AMERICAN AUTHORS' AUTHORITY—BULLETIN

*** In addition to the membership of the Screen Writers' Guild, AAA has now been endorsed by the Western and Midwestern Councils of the Radio Writers' Guild, and by the membership of the Western Region of RWG. Eastern Council, RWG, has endorsed licensing and referred AAA to further study.

*** AAA will be on the agenda of the meeting of the Council of the Authors' League, Sept. 18. James M. Cain will travel East as official representative of SWG to present the plan to the Council in person.

*** Actual work has gotten under way in Hollywood. The following members have been appointed to the Overall AAA Committee of SWG, with certain among them also acting as observers

for the other Guilds to which they belong: Emmet Lavery, chairman; Ring Lardner, Jr., vice-chairman; Robert Ardrey, Joseph Fields, Albert Hackett, Frances Goodrich, F. Hugh Herbert, Arthur Schwartz, also members of the Dramatists' Guild; Sam Moore, Arch Oboler, True Boardman, also of RWG; James M. Cain, Alvah Bessie, Albert Maltz, Adela Rogers St. John, also of the Authors' Guild; Philip Dunne, Edmund Beloin, Art Arthur, Everett Freeman, Louise Rousseau, Allen Rivkin, Mary McCall, Jr., and Boris Ingster, SWG only. Ex-officio members are Wm. Pomerance and Aubrey Finn, executive secretaries of SWG and RWG, and Morris Cohn, legal counsel.

*** First breakdown of committees for specific tasks is as follows:

Organization: Cain, Lardner, Cohn, McCall, Schwartz, Oboler, Ardrey, Pomerance, Finn;

Strategy (relations with other Guilds in the League and other labor groups in Hollywood): Moore, Boardman, Maltz, Dunne, Goodrich, Hackett, Beloin, Fields, Arthur;

Public Relations: Freeman, Bessie, Herbert, Rivkin, St. John, Arthur, Rousseau.

*** Space and time have made it impossible for The Screen Writer this month to bring you an exhaustive survey of press comment on AAA. Such a section will appear regularly, beginning next month. Editorials from major publications criticizing the plan will, where possible, be reprinted in full, in order that members may be fully apprised of national opinion on the subject.

(For additional information on AAA, see Editorial, Page 3; Howard Lindsay's The Way Ahead, Page 7; Communications, Page 37; Correspondence, Page 51; and News Notes, Page 53.)



SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD, INC.

1655 NO. CHEROKEE AVE., HOLLYWOOD 28, CALIFORNIA
AFFILIATED WITH AUTHORS' LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.

E D I T O R I A L

BY A VOTE of 343 to 7, the Screen Writers' Guild has decided to work for the establishment of an American Authors' Authority.

This nearly unanimous vote of a membership in which can be found almost every conceivable political opinion is the most effective answer to those who have sought to obscure the real issues with wild talk of Communism, czars (or tsars) and a sinister writers' plot to "take over the industry." Still, the attacks on the plan have been so virulent and widespread that perhaps this is the time and place to take some note of them.

The cries of "Red" from lick-spittle trade-papers, gossip columnists and Mr. Hearst's trained seals can be dismissed as beneath contempt. The American Authors' Authority is capitalism, naked and simple. But it is capitalism for writers, not for entrepreneurs. It envisages more ownership for writers, more money for writers, and encourages enterprise among writers — enterprise, moreover, of an intensely private and individualistic nature. If this be Communism, Guild members have a right to feel that Mr. Marx has been seriously misquoted to them.

As to the Czars and Tsars, it is sufficient to point out that the "tough mugg" called for in James M. Cain's masterly exposition of the plan (in *The Screen Writer* for July) is to be a salaried executive,

responsible at all times to a democratically-elected board of directors representing the four Guilds of the Authors' League.

The charge that the Authority would somehow dictate the content of a member's material (with the strong implication that all but Communist propaganda would be excluded) was always an egregious lie and was effectively nailed as such by the unanimous resolution of the membership reported in the last issue of this magazine: "That there be no discrimination in the rights or treatment accorded by AAA to any piece of written material by reason of its content."

We have heard the argument that the members of the League will be compelled to register their material with the Authority and dispose of it only under Authority rules, and that such compulsion, however benevolent, is undemocratic. This is an argument as hoary as it is anarchic. Benevolent compulsion is only a synonym for law. The power of the Authority to compel is the only guarantee of protection the writer can have. It is the law which prevents the lessee of a writer's material from brow-beating him into a disadvantageous arrangement. Indeed, if we should succumb to such an argument, we should, to be consistent, also have to question the democracy of the Guild, the League, and, for that matter, the Constitution of the United States itself.

There remain other curious charges against the plan and the writers' intentions. The talk now floating up from studio private dining-rooms and the clubhouse at Del Mar runs somewhat as follows: "The writers may say that what they want is only to retain their copyrights, but what they really want is to dictate to us what shall go on the screen, to tell us we can't change or cut material written while they are on salary to us."

We may rightly dismiss this as comedy, but we must remember that the producers have always regarded the Screen Writers' Guild with a suspicion verging on the comic, and that this allegation indicates clearly the type of strategy they will use against us. They hope to fight, not against what is in our minds, but against what they **think** (or pretend to think) is in our minds.

Let us be very clear on this point. What we accomplish through the Authors' Authority will benefit the writer only in so far as he is a vendor

(or rather, lessor) of original material. It will have no effect, save by indirection, on the writer acting purely in his capacity as a salaried employee of the producer. Anything we do to better the conditions of the writer **as employee** will be done through our new Basic Agreement in 1949 with the producers, not through the Authority. Conversely, our closer association with the Authors' League through the workings of the Authority will not interfere with our efforts, as an organization of employees, to strengthen our ties with other organizations of employees, such as the Actors', the Directors' and the other guilds and unions within the industry.

We advise the producers to stick to the real issues, which are, for them:

- (1) under the Authority, they will not, through remakes, be able to make two or more profits out of one story purchase;
- (2) they will be restrained from accepting as a free gift from the writer his secondary rights (television, radio, serial, etc.) in any piece of material;
- (3) they will be restrained from freezing a writer's material on their shelves for an indefinite period while he watches his chances for other sales go a-glimmering.

In the meantime, our plans go forward. All writers should understand that the engagement we have just fought, for all the wild banging of musketry on the part of the household militia of the local press, was only a skirmish, and a minor one at that. The real battle lies ahead. For some idea of its scope, of the massiveness and armament of the opposing battalions, read Mr. Howard Lindsay's article on the next pages of this issue.

We must be prepared to fight hard and all the time, to sacrifice, to endure vilification and abuse. A determined effort to break the Guild will be made on this, as it has been made on every other issue of real merit and importance to writers.

Make no mistake about it, the current attacks on other, unrelated actions taken by the Guild, the personal slanders now being spread about

prominent members and employees of the Guild, are all part of such an effort and are directly inspired by, and only by, the Guild's proposal for an American Authors' Authority.

To make the Authority a reality will require the time, the courage and the brains of every member of the Guild. Members who voted for the plan will be called on from time to time to work for it. When your call comes, we hope you will respond. Victory will be worth the effort.

★ ★ ★

NEW MINIMUM FOR WRITERS

A Conciliation Committee made up of representatives of the Screen Writers' Guild and the member companies of the Association of Motion Picture Producers agreed upon an increase in the minimum weekly wage for qualified screen writers and in the minimum payments for scripts written on a flat deal contract.

The minimum weekly wage for writers who have worked in the industry for 12 months or who have received screenplay credits was set at \$125.00 by the Producer-Guild Basic Agreement entered into in 1942. The Agreement fixed the minimum price for action or western scripts on a flat deal contract at \$1,000. \$1,500 was the feature flat deal minimum. The new scale, which took effect on August 27th, provides for a weekly wage of \$187.50 for qualified writers, \$1,500 for the lower budget flat deals, and \$2,250 for feature flat deals. The new scale will remain in effect for the next two years.

The Producers were represented by Marvin Ezzell, Jacob H. Karp, and Robert Newman. The Screen Writers' Guild representatives were Mary McCall, Jr., Richard Collins, and Philip Dunne, Chairman of the Conciliation Committee.

T H E W A Y A H E A D

HOWARD LINDSAY

MAY an inactive member comment upon the meeting of the Screen Writers' Guild at which it voted to approve in principle James Cain's suggestion for an American Authors' Authority?

I was tremendously impressed by the number of screen writers who turned out for this meeting, by the interest they showed in the American Authors' Authority and in their evident hope that its successful establishment would lead them into the Promised Land. It is because I know the bitterness that can come out of hopes deferred that I am writing this letter.

The path upon which Mr. Cain wishes to lead us is one which every writer should be eager to walk along; but it winds through a jungle of opposition and obstacles. It will be a long, hard and expensive journey.

Mr. Cain is much too sanguine about the time it will take and the ease with which the objective can be accomplished. When he suggests, as he did at the meeting, that the AAA can be established in two years, he is inviting the SWG to live with him in a fool's paradise.

It is quite true, as Mr. Cain points out, that the Dramatists' Guild has a cohesion that comes in part from the necessity of dramatists spending most of their time in New York. The SWG has a similar advantage in being centered in Hollywood. The members of the Radio Writers' Guild are clustered for the most part in the three cities of New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

Writers of fiction, however, are spread all over the United States. They live not only in the cities, but in remote small towns. That is one of the reasons the Authors' Guild has never succeeded in organizing a large portion of them. Another reason is that every month new writers are having their first work published. It is the writers of fiction whom it

HOWARD LINDSAY, Pulitzer-Prize-winning co-author of *State of the Union* and *Life with Father*, is now engaged in the film production of his stage hits.

will be most necessary to organize, and the experience of the Authors' Guild after the efforts of more than a quarter of a century demonstrates the terrific job it will be to do this and the years it may take.

The expense of the fight to establish an AAA will be tremendous. It cannot be done "by small loans from the four Guilds to set up a secretariat." There are only two treasuries involved, that of the SWG, and that of the Authors' League of America. I am unacquainted with the finances of the SWG nor how large a loan it could afford. The Radio Writers' Guild is, with more conscientious effort, climbing out of the red into the black, to pay its proper share of the expenses of the League. The Authors' Guild, strongly revitalized in the last two years, is only now beginning to pay its proportionate share. For a long time the Dramatists' Guild has carried too large a share of the financial burden though heavy assessments. It would be misleading to suggest that there is any large sum available, and no small sum will be sufficient. That is the situation we must face clearly and find some way of solving.

Before the AAA can achieve the power of protection for authors which it hopes to achieve, it will be necessary, as Mr. Cain points out, to change the Copyright Law. There is nothing in the experience of the Authors' League of America in its long hard struggle with the Copyright Law to suggest that this can be quickly or easily accomplished. Any lobby we may establish in Washington will be met with a counter-lobby, financed by the millions — in fact, billions — behind the motion picture industry, the radio industry, and the publishing industry.

Until the AAA is strongly organized, and the Copyright Law changed, it would not have the power to enforce Mr. Cain's plan to finance the Authority by a tax upon the people who buy writers' material. Writers justly feel that the sale or lease of their property for the purpose of publication or use upon the screen or upon the air waves should not include other and subsidiary rights. The Authority is to be established to prevent this. Mr. Cain proposes that the Authority will not only achieve this, but it will force the motion picture producers, the radio stations, and the publishers, to pay the running expenses of the Authority. Again, it is all made to look too easy. Personally, I find the ethics of this part of the plan shocking, and I know it will be one hell of a fight.

During the meeting of the SWG, when the members voted to approve the AAA in principle, I had the feeling that the project was being made to look too easy and too simple, but I was not able to formulate my thoughts sufficiently to address the meeting. We were told that all we had to do was to be willing to assign our copyright to the Authority. We were told we were individually free to lease any portion of our property for any price whatsoever. We were given the impression that what we were surrendering was entirely nominal, but that what we would achieve by such a surrender would make all writers tremendously powerful. This is nonsense. The strength of the AAA will be in proportion to how much we do surrender to the Authority.

The Dramatists' Guild is strong because of what its members give up individually. We give up the right to sell our plays as motion pictures at certain times, under certain conditions. We give up the right of accepting less than a minimum royalty and the right to cut that royalty, upon our personal decision, for more than two weeks. We give up many individual rights. We give up much money. We are assessed against every penny of royalty we make during the run of our plays as a first-class production. We are assessed two percent of our profits from the sale of our play as a motion picture. Our strength as a Guild is in proportion to what we individually surrender to the Guild.

The meeting of the SWG was told that when the Authority had been established, we could lease any part of our property for five cents, if we cared to. Suppose a writer leased the motion picture rights of his story for so many thousand dollars, and at the same time leased to the studio the radio rights for five cents and the television rights for five cents? Don't think for one minute that some such scheme would not be presented to the writer. **Writers should not be led to believe that they can get something for nothing. If it is to be indeed an Authority, we shall have to give it authority.**

The purpose behind the AAA is a sound one. It is an end that must be achieved as soon as we can bring it about. Let us work toward it vigorously and sensibly, but let us not for one moment delude ourselves into thinking it can be easily or inexpensively achieved.

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S W G S H O R T - P L A Y A W A R D

MILTON KRIMS

WHAT is a Hollywood screen writer? Is he a hack, a carpenter, a limited technician? Is he a creator, a craftsman, a man of purposeful words? The argument is old as talking pictures . . . and as stale. It has been influenced by prejudice, geography, envy and ego; it has resulted in stupid defense mechanisms, inferiority complexes and just plain short tempered impatience with sometime quite valid criticism. We who write for the screen have tried — at times too violently — to make others understand we do not work under self-imposed limitations, that we fret and strain against them even as we understand them. If we appear to accept them it is out of temporary necessity and with the deep conviction of eventual freedom of expression. Meanwhile we write honestly and as well as we can. Nor do we forget there really is no valid rebuttal to the critic who says, "If you don't like what you're doing, you can always do something else."

But your Guild is not a critic. It is made up of writers, governed by writers elected by writers. It knows the problems of writers and tries to understand and if possible solve them. It believes screen writers are creators, craftsmen, writers of purposeful words. And it has decided to do something about it.

It proposes to establish a Writers' Theater. It proposes that this Writers' Theater will provide a facility for the presentation of short plays by members of the Screen Writers' Guild, plays in which writers

MILTON KRIMS, a well-known screen writer, had long stage experience before coming to Hollywood, having been at one time one of the directors of The Labor Theatre in New York.

will say what they want to say in the manner in which they believe it should be said. It proposes to produce a group of three such short plays each quarter, twelve a year. It proposes that these twelve plays will be published each year by a top flight publisher and put on the market for public sale. It proposes that with the exception of Guild production, all other production shall be on an author participation basis. It proposes to present an annual award for the best short play. And it proposes to establish this theater facility immediately, the first of the series to be presented sometime in December.

The success of this venture depends entirely on you. It is yours to be nourished to a community tradition or starved to a quick failure. Talk is terribly cheap now. Your Guild wants you to write short plays, short operas, poetic plays, ballet, choral . . . whatever you wish, however stylized, however imaginative, however "artistic." Only high merit and purpose will determine production. A Board of Readers will pass on all plays, choose those most likely to succeed.

The Screen Writers' Guild is made up of writers of purpose, intelligence, good taste, imagination. Your Guild believes that and it proposes to prove it in the only practical way available at this time. Therefore, it asks you to start thinking, writing and sending in your short plays as quickly as possible. December is not too far off . . . and December is a wonderful time for the first of what we hope will be a series of memorable opening nights.



The Short Play Committee of the Screen Writers' Guild, created by the Future Policy Committee for the purpose outlined above, includes, in addition to Mr. Krims, Paul Green, Pulitzer prize winner and one of America's most distinguished playwrights, and William Kozlenko, the outstanding American authority on the one-act play. Both are now active as screen writers in Hollywood.



I N D E P E N D E N T S ' D A Y

MARTIN FIELD

WHEN Leo McCarey, an independent producer, eclipses MGM's Louis B. Mayer as the country's top earner of the year . . .

When, in the past three years, no less than 150 independent production companies have sent incorporation papers to Sacramento . . .

When fully one-third of all pictures shooting in Hollywood as of this writing are independent productions . . .

Independents' Day in the movie industry has dawned with a bang!

What does independent production mean to screen writers? What are the advantages and the disadvantages? Let's cover the advantages.

First, independent production creates a larger market for writers' wares, resulting in more competition and in better prices. Instead of eight potential buyers of a story property, there are now more than fifty independent producers and producing companies that are in the open market and will meet or exceed major studio prices. They include Lester Cowan, Cagney, Walter Wanger, Hunt Stromberg, Benedict Bogeaus, Edward Small, Sol Lesser, Charles R. Rogers, Andrew Stone, Seymour Nebenzal, Jules Levey, Preston Sturges, Frank Ross, Howard Hawks, Jesse Lasky, Milton Sperling's United States Pictures, Einfeld-Loew Enterprise, Hal Wallis, Capra-Wyler-Stevens-Briskin's Liberty Films, Buddy Rogers-Ralph Cohn's Comet Productions, Frank Borzage, Independent Artists, Skirball-Manning, Mark Hellinger, Jem Productions, Leo McCarey, Mervyn LeRoy, Selznick's Vanguard Films, Armand

MARTIN FIELD, a young screen writer, makes his second contribution to *The Screen Writer* with this article. He previously discussed speculative writing, in a piece entitled *Who Works for Nothing?*

Deutsch's Story Productions, Zoltan Korda, Roy del Ruth, and many more.

An independent, for instance, Cagney Productions, outbid every major studio and paid \$250,000 for *A Lion Is in the Streets*, reputed to be the highest price ever paid for screen rights to a novel. In many instances involving screen originals, these have sold to independent people while a major studio was making up its mind whether it wanted the story or wanted to meet the writer's price.

Second, independent production means less supervision. All writers are unhappily familiar with the "chain of command" in large studios that stretches from the associate producer to the unit producer to the executive producer to the vice-president in charge of production to the head of the whole studio and back down again to the Sad Sack writer.

By the time this army of people with varying backgrounds, experiences, tastes, ideas, and abilities gets through sticking its supervisory fingers into the "manuscript pie" and comes out saying "What a bright boy am I," the writer has been through a degrading rigmarole of having a dozen bosses and of being kept waiting for a decision from each one, none of whom dares to express his opinion until his superior has done so first.

Independent production eliminates much of this exasperating chain of command. Here the producer himself is often the only one with whom the writer has to consult, and the producer is not afraid to make final decisions.

However, this is not to imply that because the writer has fewer bosses, he has any greater say over his script in an independent company than he has in a major studio. For instance, the writer who works for an indie, on a salary basis, may have just as tough a struggle there, as he would anywhere else, to get his producer to agree to leave out, let us say, a corny characterization that perpetuates the stereotype that Negroes are shiftless and lazy.

But there is one aspect of independent production which is the key to greater freedom for the writer. And that is the profit-participation deal which raises the writer from hired hand to the level of partner. It is the third, and most important, advantage of independent production.

The rise of independent production companies has given impetus

to profit-participation deals because these deals are often the only way in which major studio bidding can be topped. A high grossing independent production can frequently net an actor, director, or writer far more on a percentage basis than any straight salary deal. Even should the picture not be a top grosser, the actor, writer, or director still stands a good chance of netting as much as he would on a salary basis. The chances of making less than on salary would seem to be slight. Don McElwaine, an executive of Andrew Stone Productions, has said: "Off-hand, I can't think of any independent film which has not paid off (its) investment."

Although it's true that at present there are only a handful of writers working on percentage deals, their number is increasing all the time. Little more than a year ago, in the June, 1945 issue of *The Screen Writer*, Mary McCall, Jr., writing about her profit-participation experiences, said: "Writers have as yet seldom been included in these profit-sharing independent ventures as partners and not as employees." She cited the names of only two other writers, Nunnally Johnson and F. Hugh Herbert, then working on these terms.

But the percentage plan is growing so fast that, within the fourteen months since then, many more writers have gotten percentage deals, among them Niven Busch, Joseph Fields, Marion Parsonnet, Lewis Jacobs, Walter Hart, Agnes Christine Johnson, Aubrey Wisberg, John Klorer. Doubtless you know of others.

Contributing greatly to the recent increase is Eagle-Lion's policy of percentages for writers. "We believe writers are among the key figures in the motion picture scene," Bryan Foy said when he announced these arrangements for writers.

We can undoubtedly learn a lot about profit-sharing deals from the writers now engaged in them. It is to be hoped that we shall soon have a recounting of their experiences in *The Screen Writer*, so we can all profit from them. There must be a great deal to add to the subject since Mary McCall's and John Klorer's highly informative articles on it appeared.

Now let us examine the disadvantages of independent production for the writer. First, there seems to be a tendency in a few of these companies to plead poverty where the writer is concerned.

In one instance, a writer submitted an original to the story editor of an indie outfit. The story, 49 pages long, aroused a lot of interest. The story editor said: "We'd like to see a fuller treatment before we make a final decision."

The writer replied: "I'll be happy to do it if you put me on the payroll for a few weeks to develop the story."

The story editor screamed: "We're not a big major company. We're a poor little ole independent and we can't afford to pay out money." That week the story editor's company announced it had hired an actor for one picture for \$200,000.

The second disadvantage is that independent companies want to "play it safe" by imitating the kind of routine pictures made by the majors. This tendency negates one of the great appeals of independent production, that of doing pictures which are not run of the mill. One disturbing illustration is at hand.

A writer said to the head of an important independent outfit, "I suppose you'll be doing pictures which will really be out of the ordinary, not like the conveyor-belt stuff you had to do when you were with a major company."

The indie head was shocked. "OH, NO!," he exclaimed, "WE certainly have to play it safe. The majors can afford to experiment; we have to do only the kind of pictures that have been tried and proven at the box-office. We have no intention of doing anything else."

The third disadvantage concerns new writers mainly. That is the independent's unwillingness to develop new writers. Several major studios have new writers on the payroll and while any training given them is haphazard and unorganized, at least they do have a chance to work in a studio and acquire some experience. The indies seem perfectly willing and financially able to keep new acting talent on the payroll until it learns the craft. Enterprise and Hal Wallis, to name only two, are developing acting talent under contract. But so far no independent company has done anything about developing writing talent under contract.

We have examined the advantages to the writer of independent production: increased market, less supervision, greater money. And the

disadvantages: pleading poverty, playing it safe, and unwillingness to develop new writers.

Obviously the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. As writers, therefore, our best interests lie in encouraging independent production as much as possible. For that's the road to greater stature and importance.

The recent tax decision on taxing individual corporations on the same basis as personal income will not affect the majority of independent producers. The scope of the ruling has not yet been made entirely clear but it can reasonably be expected that the Treasury will differentiate between legal enterprise and simple tax evasion. Practically every indie has announced its intention of continuing in business.

What policy can we follow to increase and strengthen independent production which offers us greater recognition?

We should instruct our agents to offer our wares and services to independents first on profit-sharing deals, where possible. Getting such a set-up may not be as tough as some of us think it will be. Just remember that lots of indies are getting backing from banks on the basis of the SCRIPT. In a recent ad in a weekly newsmagazine, the Bank of America boasted that people who come to them for loans find men who, among other virtues can "visualize the movie producer's scenario as a box office hit" — meaning that it is the scenario that frequently determines whether or not the indie producer gets financing. Even an Ingrid Bergman or a Clark Gable in the cast will not fetch a loan if the banks think the story is bad.

Failing to get participation deals, we can still get from the indies salaries equal to, or better than, major studio salaries.

By going first to the independent, we are helping to improve our status in the industry because eventually the majors will be forced to meet the bidding of the independents. Yes, and even offer percentage deals.

Already, Republic is making percentage deals with writers. International Pictures, which started on a percentage policy as an independent, is continuing this successful policy now that it is in the major league as Universal-International. And, as previously mentioned, Eagle-Lion is practically on an all profit-sharing basis with writers.

When an independent organization calls itself Story Productions

and proclaims to the industry and the public that its entire production program will be shaped around the importance of its story properties, that's the kind of writer recognition to make the majors sit up and take notice.

In short, Independents' Day is here. The people best qualified to write its Declaration are writers!

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INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL AT CANNES

The following is the list of entrants, by country, for the International Film Festival of Cannes, to be held Sept. 20-Oct. 5, under the auspices of the Provisional French Government's Ministries of Foreign Affairs, National Education, and Information (the films, selected by the participating countries, must, in at least 50% of the cases, constitute first world releases):

Argentina: *La Dame Duende*, *Villarica del Santo*; Belgium: *Men Like the Others*; Czechoslovakia: *The Insulted Student*, *Men Without Wings*; Denmark: *Dies Irae*, *Red Prairies*; Great Britain: (Features) *The Seventh Veil*, *Brief Encounter*, *Captain Heart*, *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *The Magic Bow*, *A Matter of Life and Death*, (Documentaries) *World of Plenty*, *Cyprus is an Island*, *Steel*, *Life Cycle of the Onion*, *Your Children's Eyes*, *Instruments of the Orchestra*, *Open Drop Ether*, *Handling Ships*, *The Way We Live*, *Man — One Family*; Mexico: *Maria Candelaria*, *La Barraca*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Flor de Durango*, *Mehe de Corner esa Tune*, *Campeon sin Corona*; Poland: *Forbidden Songs*; Portugal: *Camoens*, *Three Days Without God*; Sweden: *Blod och Eld*, *Hets*; U. S. S. R.: (Features) *The Crucial Turn*, *The Stone Flower*, *Hello Moscow*, *White Fang*, *Glinka*, *Zoya*, *Girl No. 217*, (Documentaries) *Berlin*, *The City of Bees*, *Sports Parade*; Canada, Holland, Norway and Switzerland are entering only short subjects in the competition.

France will be represented by the cream of her post-war production, including: *Pastoral Symphony*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Battle of the Railways*, *Motherland*, *Father Tranquil*, *A Ghost*, and the short subjects, *Aubervilliers*, *Aubusson*, *Flotsam*, *Children's Games*, *Solar Protuberances*, *The Correct Position for Writing*, *Network X . . .*, *The Magic Flute*, *The Country Outing*, and *Man*.

U. S. entries have not yet been finally announced, but it is understood that they are to include: *Gaslight*, *Rhapsody in Blue*, *Gilda*, *Notorious*, *Song of Bernadette*, *Lost Weekend*, *Anna and the King of Siam*, and *Hitler Lives!*

The prizes will be awarded by an International Jury, comprising one representative of each of the countries participating, and will be constituted by original paintings by a group of some thirty world-famous artists.

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NICK GRINDE

THIRTY years ago a man named Max Fleisher conceived the novel, and as it turned out, prophetic idea of mixing cartoons with human beings on the motion picture screen. His particular novelty was dubbed Out Of The Inkwell, and in case you are lucky enough not to remember that far back the gag was that the artist himself, in the flesh, was photographed working at his drawing board. After drawing an inkwell, a little imp, called Koko the Clown, climbed out of the ink bottle which was of course his natural habitat. Then ensued the shenanigans of the moment wherein the little fugitive from a blotter bedeviled his creator, and the artist in turn threatened to return him to his bottleneck or erase him out of his bothersome existence.

Then between 1922 and 1927 a similar technique was employed to bring to the screen a cartoon character called Colonel Heeza Liar. Walter Lantz, one of the active animated cartoon leaders in Hollywood, was one of the humans to appear with this cartoon which he himself drew. Anita Louise, of more recent fame, made her screen debut as a child actress in these comedies.

Another example of this dramatic double entry type of cartooning was called The Alice Comedies. It was created about 1923 by Walt Disney for Winkler Pictures of New York. Little Alice, who was the live figure in the cartoon, was enacted at one time or another by two different

NICK GRINDE, in addition to being a film director of long experience, has distinguished himself with contributions to numerous national magazines, most recently The Saturday Evening Post.

girls. One is now a housewife in Paterson, N. J. and is having the same trouble finding nylons that you are. Those three cartoon series were about the only examples of such democratic intermingling of the two mediums unless you count the times the singer got in front of the lantern slides.

Then for the next twenty years the innovation lay dormant. Nothing more was done about it because its novelty had been cashed in on and although the mechanisms which could propagate this bi-partisan medium improved from time to time there was no particular reason for its resurrection at any given moment.

But now we find at our doorstep that Rip Van Winkle of the show business, the part flesh and part ink talking picture, and the same astute prophets, or some fellows who look just like them, are predicting a lethargic future for this renovated method of picture making. They could be wrong again, as they had been about the talking picture twenty years ago.

At the moment about the only example of the interlarding of the two mediums, that is, having human actors and pen and ink thespians appear together, is Disney's *The Three Caballeros*. This is a masterful delivery of the new medium, as such, but was given a somewhat confused reception because it was a use of the vehicle without a strong dramatic purpose. There is no doubt but that the galloping paintings mingle most convincingly with the live girls on the beach. But after a bravo for the achievement, there was a tendency to say, "So what?" There was something missing, and that something was a story worthy of this new addition to the possibilities of motion picture technique.

The flirtation between the little water color puppets and the members of the Screen Actors' Guild is being looked upon in the best circles as mere puppy-love. But just wait until a few marriages have legalized things and you begin to meet these new couples socially. When they move into your own neighborhood theatre you'll know what's been going on right under your nose.

The greatest and certainly the best known of the full length all-cartoon pictures was *Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs*. It had a swell story with novelty right up to here. It had suspense, unity and comedy, which are mighty welcome ingredients in any man's theatre. The dwarfs

couldn't conceivably have been improved upon. Remember Dopey? The picture was great from all angles. All angles but one! The Prince and the Princess could have been improved upon. And thus we come to a start in the consideration of the field in which animaction (which is one producer's word for mixed action) is needed.

Just suppose that the Prince and the Princess had been live actors. Not just anybody, but top favorites. Say the Princess had been Shirley Temple, and the Prince had been — you pick him, and that their performances had been understandably human. The delightful world of whimsy in which they found themselves would have remained unchanged except that its values would have been heightened, not only by the sharper contrast between the real and the fantastic but because of the convincing acting of the principals. Supplanting a human with a cartoon is doing it the hard way. Reality is too precious to compromise. It would be just as foolhardy to try and do better by Dopey and his pals by substituting human actors. They are already in their proper medium, and brother, that's something.

If it's fantasy you're after you can find no better starting point than an actual place with real, familiar faces. By its very nature, fantasy is a divergence from the real. You may as well start as matter-of-fact as you can.

When Frank Baum wrote *The Wizard of Oz* he had Dorothy and her little dog Toto as down-to-earth and neighborly as all get out. Then when they were cycloned from Kansas to Oz, everyone and everything was in contrast to her normalcy. When this picture was produced several years ago all live actors were used. Today you may be sure your favorite theatre would bring you the combined efforts of grease paint and ink-well. There is a field for both and if they have to get together to do the job, well that's just too bad.

Remember *Babes in Toyland* with the great Victor Herbert music? That was well made, too, with Laurel and Hardy, but compared to the fun those master comics could have in this new medium with the toy soldiers, the original would now seem muscle-bound.

Then think of *Alice in Wonderland*. Alice is a real little girl, everything else is fantasy in spades. When they made that some time ago all

the characters were live actors, also. Everyone tried hard but it didn't quite jell. Whimsy is pretty elusive stuff to conjure up.

More dramatic vehicles than the examples of fantasy just mentioned are available to the studios, and most of them are in the public domain, which means that they will have no story cost outside of the fortune which will be paid to the screen writers who adapt them to the screen.

King Arthur, with its startling parallels to presentday events and its There-Will-Always-Be-An-England theme is already in preparation by the Hugh Harman studios. The actors will be top players, and so, dramatically, the story will hold you, not as a novelty, but as a well done play. And when Sir Gareth meets the dragon it will be no papier-maché lizard. It will be the ferocious reptile right out of the book.

There is a harpy in that story somewhere too, half bird and half beast. Central Casting won't have to bother over this confused fauna, and neither will the zoo. It will be undiluted essence of inkwell. Merlin the Magician will be a well paid actor, but his sorcery will make Houdini turn over.

The Disney Studios have nearly finished their second entry in the new medium, Uncle Remus, and the company has spent many weeks in Arizona getting the backgrounds they wanted.

The story of the Arabian Nights, which is a perennial favorite, will get a shot in the arm when it is made with no limits placed on its production possibilities. Rip Van Winkle should come into its own and pave the way for a general release of stories of this type which so far have been more or less earthbound.

If anyone gets around to doing Homer's Odyssey and shows Ulysses (played by your pet actor) returning from the Trojan Wars and seeing Circe change men to swine, the thing can now be handled to perfection. In the same yarn there is a disagreeable fellow named Cyclops. He is a giant with one eye in the middle of his forehead, and they are as hard to cast as three-headed babies. But now it can be done with ease. Then there's the Flying Yorkshireman, Wagner's operas, and all the Norse mythology, to mention a few more which would benefit from this blending of the techniques.

Think for a moment of the children's stories like Kingsley's Water

Babies. How would you like to see little Butch Jenkins talking to a fish at the bottom of the ocean? If you were a child, that is. Then there is Jack and the Beanstalk, Cinderella, and Milne's Winnie the Pooh stories.

Modern up-to-the-minute yarns have their moments where they could expand to advantage. Lady in the Dark had no complaints, but here or there the application of this elastic partnership could have been stretched to include a gag from the dream world.

One Touch of Venus, which did all right on Broadway, has a lot of dream stuff which needs ever so much heavy planning to get itself properly on the screen. Harvey likewise has possibilities.

All pictures with psychiatric problems, dream sequences, or Heaven or Hell indicated, can do with a bit of help because these are difficult subjects at best. Pictures which delve into the mind are definitely on the up-beat. They could nearly all use the release that a blending of the cartoon technique with the regular established picture procedure will positively give them.

How better could you delve into the workings of a human mind than to do it unshackled by your medium of expression? Remember the famous Cabinet of Dr. Caligari? That was a great picture but it was just itching for amplification, although few knew it at the time. Sort of a seven years' itch. Karloff has done some pretty gruesome deeds in his day, but watch out now. Wow!

The mind retains the picturesque, and the better screen writers, knowing this, should remember their new tool when dashing off sequences about, say, a song writer in the throes of creation. What the composer sees is, by common agreement, out of this world. All right, let it be, the animators will help you if you treat them right. Any type of symbolism or even an alcoholic's nightmare can be interpreted better by mingling dream stuff with mundane goings on because that's just what actually happens.

There are stories which would tell a lot better if the world could be looked at through the eyes of the central character. Suppose a hunted man, cornered by his own obsessions, feels the walls of the city closing in on him. He sees it and we are interested in his feelings. Why not show it? Music has been doing exactly this type of interpretation for a long time.

Lightning storms can be tailored to order, cloud effects with symbolic figures materializing out of the very essence of the mist are eager to serve your emotional pleasure. Davy Jones can materialize before your eyes and greedily pull down the ship he has coveted. Idealized beauty with a profusion of blossoms or snow can be given an almost musical treatment in this many faceted talkINK technique.

When you get into the field of comedy the lid is not only off, it's discarded. Anything that a cartoon character has done heretofore, a human can now do. Suppose our friends the Three Stooges chase each other up the stairs so fast that centrifugal force hurls their feet against the stair railing and they run up those upright spindles in a horizontal position; it would be funny in the theatre. And it can be done now — it's just waiting for a Columbus to do it right.

If an acrobatic cartoon can walk on a ceiling, so can a funny man. You might not accept Charles Boyer doing it, he being of the old orthodox gravity school. But Edgar Kennedy might find himself in a predicament where it would prove to be a very useful and side-splitting escapade.

To the co-ordinating technician who is going to manipulate these figures so they will appear to do the remarkable things hinted at, it makes no difference whether they are inky harlequins or likenesses of real people. After all he is dealing with an image on a piece of celluloid and whether it is one or the other has lost its significance at this stage of the procedure. If the order is to make steam come out of the actor's ears, who is he to question or even care whether the tiny figure is cartoon or not? When the character sits on the radiator, steam will come out of his ears, and if it's done right, you'll laugh.

Like any effect in pictures there are very often several ways of accomplishing the result. To take the simple case of a cartoon character wandering into a very real situation, let's see how it is done: A real room complete with furniture, carpets, doors, windows and everything is provided. Real actors are rehearsed to act with entirely imaginary effigies. Whether it be an elf or an elephant, the actors are run through their business and lines with this imaginary entity supposedly moving about the set. The size and movements of this, as yet uncreated, character are only visualized, but a pattern of its movements is agreed upon and its

dialogue established. This dialogue can be read by an offstage voice belonging to a fellow named Joe for the benefit of the active players. It's nice for them to know what is being said to them even if they can't see who is saying it. Then these actors are photographed talking to and supposedly looking at the creature, and their part of the dialogue is recorded as it is spoken.

When this film is finished, the frames, as the single pictures are called, are projected one at a time on a ground glass about ten by twelve inches in size. This gadget is called a Rotoscope, in case you care. Animation paper, which is a sort of tracing paper, is placed over this glass and the needed cartoon is drawn to fit the action. What it will do has of course all been agreed upon in the writing and the rehearsal, but it is here, when the cartoon is actually drawn, that the element of error is polished out. Any slight deviation on the part of the actors from the original pattern can be corrected by adapting the drawings to what actually did happen in the existing film. As the drawings are made with the picture into which they will fit, literally right under their noses, it would be pretty hard not to have them fit into their environment. If the little fellow is supposed to sit in a real chair, he is drawn with his chair right there.

These tracing paper drawings are then copied on clear celluloid sheets and colored, assuming that the picture is to be in glorious technicolor, and then sent to the laboratory for final reproduction. The combining of the two pictures, the original film and the drawings, is a routine matter of film printing. The sound tracks with the dialogue are inter-spliced and the result you see is as convincing as if it had all happened that way in the first place.

If, on the other hand, live actors are to invade the cartoon world, then a system of rear projection, or process, will be used. In essence and with certain refinements this is the same device which is used when a New York street is put behind a Hollywood taxicab.

Many locations which because of whimsical or romantic implication, or geographical difficulties, are impossible to find on this troubled globe, or at any rate within a reasonable distance from Hollywood, can be whipped up to order by an artist.

A drawing is made of an agreed-on location and then photographed

on motion picture film. This is then rear projected onto a life sized transparent screen. In front of this Alice-In-Wonderland set walks Alice in the flesh. The combination of the projected drawing and the little girl are then photographed and the result shows her talking to Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum who were on the projected film.

A nice flourish may be added to this combined film by now going back to process No. 1 and adding some more drawn characters on top of this almost finished film. This is known as the standing, sitting, standing, dive — or at any rate should be.

If for any reason a third method is needed, then the system of the traveling mat is employed. Suppose a cat tiptoeing his way across a barnyard is desired. The real barnyard has already been photographed. But the furtive feline can be better controlled as a drawing, so it is drawn against a neutral background which is really no background at all. Then the figure of the cat is over-lighted on the printing machine so that it becomes a silhouette and the barnyard film is reproduced with this silhouette tiptoeing across it. It really amounts to what looks like a hole in the film. So now we have a barnyard scene with the shape of a cat moving about. Then into this void the cat is printed in its proper light key. The cat fits like the missing piece of a jig saw puzzle for the simple reason that the silhouette mat was made from the actual drawings of the cat. It's like putting a key in a keyhole.

Of course the processes just described have many ramifications and refinements. There are combinations and deviations of the methods to meet the specific requirements and meticulous steps that have to be taken to insure precision. The charting of a composite picture with dialogue and music takes more blueprints than a submarine, and has to be intricately patterned and timed with cue sheets that are awe-inspiring in their complexity and accuracy. But it's all in a good cause and if the fellows who do it for you weren't busy that way they'd probably be doing something else just as hard. That's the kind of fellows they are.

The science of motion picture manufacture is a series of engineering operations, and the more contrivances that can be regimented into useful service, the sooner pictures will come into their ultimate own. In the beginning the moving picture was just a mechanical invention with no art form to it. The artists who have tried to improve the medium have

progressed hand in hand with the gadgeteers. The creative element always needed the technicians to bring their dreams to fruition. Every time a story has presented a requirement some guy in the studios has figured out a way of getting it on the screen. Of course, some of the problems had to wait their turn. But you have to stand in line for butter, too.

Of course, there is still a preponderance of stories to which the addition of the cartoon technique would mean nothing. Those are the stories whose very nature is reality. A fellow works in an advertising agency for example, and he wants desperately to meet the girl who designs those collapsible cabana chairs so that he can get her as a client. Then one day while riding up the escalator at Macy's, he gets into an argument with a guy who has one of the fanny hammocks under his arm and who insists on trying to put it up. Well, who should be there also but the girl herself?

So after the boy wraps up the girl's sprained ankle (which she got in the comedy routine) he takes her to lunch, falls in love, and marries her. Not right away, of course, but after a few reels of on-and-off adventure.

There'll always be stories like that, and their very naturalness is only a healthy contrast to the more fanciful items in literature.

But, if it is handled right the infiltration of cartoon technique will not be called to your attention any more than the countryside outside of Spencer Tracy's train window is advertised as a trick. You'll accept it as a story telling ingredient along with the rest of the methods of picture making, which is all that it is. To announce "part cartoon and part flesh" would be as unnecessary to a film with a legitimate story appeal as a listing of Betty Grable's chemical ingredients, intriguing as they might be.

After all, if art is supposed to be the concealment of effort, we should make an effort to conceal the effort.

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THE RETURN OF A RATIONALIST

.. JOHN DOHM

FOR several months in 1942 I was based at an Air Transport Command field on the coast of central Africa. At that point in the war it was not yet fashionable to be concerned about morale, and we were left to our own devices for entertainment between flight schedules. In the afternoons we went swimming off the marvellous beaches along the coast, where the breakers rolled in from a quarter-mile out to sea, and we lay in the sun and ate fresh pineapples which cost a cent a piece. Near sunset three trucks from the base came down to the beach to pick us up in time for the evening meal of canned corn and Spam.

There were motion pictures after dark at the outdoor theatre which the four local members of Special Services built and staffed. I regret to say that we did not as a rule receive very moving samples of Hollywood's sorcery but, the jungle being what it is, we had little choice in our nocturnal diversion and there were ordinarily two or three hundred men standing around on the hummocks waiting for the gates to open. This was a unique little theater, incidentally, in that it boasted a colony of fascinated but inflammable African moths who used to flit around in the light from the projector, throwing great bat-like shadows on the screen, until they burst into flames and crashed. Under the seats there were also present various species of mosquitoes, snakes, rodents, and other delightful fauna.

On one particular night a friend and I made our usual pilgrimage

JOHN DOHM, a newspaper reporter before the war, flew with the Air Transport Command, and is now back in Hollywood, freelancing and working on screen originals.

to the shrine. At the gates we were inspected for laced-up mosquito boots, ties, immunization records, and letters of introduction, and were finally admitted to the privileged circle, the first few leather-padded rows reserved for those who were officers and gentlemen by federal ukase. Behind sat the untouchables, the General Issues.

Well, to be brief, the picture was painful to see. It consisted of embarrassing jokes, convulsive dancing, impossible love-making, and many clichés. You would probably recognize the title if I named it, but fortunately I can't remember it. Nobody hissed, however, and when it was all over everybody got up and went home as if nothing had happened, which it hadn't. Most of the theater-goers apparently considered it not so awful, or maybe they just didn't give a damn.

My friend and I went over to the officers' club and ordered a gallon of African beer, which was the way you ordered beer in those parts. I could see that my friend was brooding over some grave moral issue, probably searching around for a maxim.

"You're from Hollywood," he said finally. "I hold you indirectly responsible for this crime."

"Now, wait," I said in my most pacific tone. "I had nothing to do with it. My influence is purely theoretical."

"Explain," he demanded. "Is it hidden symbolism? What was the significance of that girl diving off the bridge into the arms of the barge captain? Go ahead, tell me. You're from Hollywood. You know what this sort of masochism represents. Or you should."

My friend was positively vehement. He was angry with me, as if I had committed some unpardonable sin.

And so I must tell you something about my friend or you will think him mad. He is really far from mad. At one time, when he was in Brooklyn College, he was a writer of plays. He also felt an inguinal rumbling which he interpreted to be *The Call*, but, alas, it was only the delayed reaction to an early life of malnutrition and poverty. He was born of wretchedly poor parents and he remained wretchedly poor until after he had left college, at which time he earned enough money to discover that there were more delectable foods than oatmeal gruel. My friend's plays were never successful, in the professional sense of the word, but they lead him to the Group Theater, which was then flourishing. He met

Clifford Odets and Irwin Shaw and he was moved by all he saw and heard, and some years later he even refused to read *The Big Money* until after I had consented to read *The Fervent Years*. He considered Odets the most honest playwright in America. And in 1940 my friend went off to Buenos Aires as a companion to a literary man and learned more about life. How he happened to become a radio operator I could never understand. Radio operators, as a class, are ordinarily diffident little men from Kansas who inevitably hear static in their sleep and take to whistling in Morse code. It was difficult to think of my friend, with all his aggressiveness and self-assertion, as a member of this strange fraternity, hammering away over the desert at a tiny key.

Sitting there in the officers' club in Africa, worrying about the picture he had just seen, my friend poured the beer. He always poured.

"Why do you come from Hollywood?" he asked. He always seemed mildly indignant and amused to think anyone would be so foolish as to live in such an improbable place. "I demand an honest answer. Don't over-dramatize."

"There's not so much wrong with Hollywood," I said. "Nothing that's not wrong with America. Hollywood is just one facet of the national melancholy, that's all. I might as well ask you why you have Spam-stains on your shirt."

"But you saw what we just saw," he said, waving his arms and knocking over an ashtray. "Did it bear any resemblance to art or life? It did not. Did it provide anybody in the audience with a fragment of common experience. My twisted skin. And yet you propose to return after the war to this aesthetic nirvana."

"My dear William," I said, summoning up all my great resources of exposition. "If you were a packer of inferior sausages into casein jackets, does that mean I should criticize you because you weren't making sirloin steaks instead? No. I should respect you, in spite of your officious odor, for your limited but very real accomplishment as a sausage-packer."

"Look at the dramatic possibilities you writers have muffed," he said, lifting the beer bottle to his lips. "Or, rather, I should say, they've muffed," he amended.

It had just occurred to him, probably, that I had been before the war only a sniffer at the edges of the Gower culture. I had sold no

originals, signed no contracts, written no screenplays, had not even been inside a studio more than three or four times in my life. Now I was placed in the anomalous position of justifying a system which hadn't wanted any part of me.

"Look what Hollywood's done to the writers," he said sharply. "It's made them so conscious of the sale of motion picture rights that most contemporary novels even contain directions for camera angles."

"That is a tendency which the honest novelist will resist," I said portentously, "assuming, of course, that he prefers to be a novelist rather than a screen writer. What you may fairly object to is the ambiguity of those who can't make up their minds to be either one or the other."

"And . . . ?"

"And the novelists and playwrights who've gone to Hollywood have never made the best screen writers. Their names look impressive on the office indexes in the writers' buildings but it's the ones whose photographs you never saw on a dust-jacket who write the bulk of the good pictures."

"It's a graveyard," my friend said, raising his voice to a volume which could almost be heard above the jolly cries of the officers at play. "Don't tell me."

"Nobody forces the writer to cash in his insurance and go to Hollywood," I said. "Yes, I know: economic pressure drives him to Hollywood. Economic pressure also sends the Austrian housepainter out to conquer the world."

"Do you recommend starvation and the pauper's stock?" he asked in his most sarcastic manner.

"Hardly," I replied. "Many competent writers have managed to survive without travelling west of the Mississippi, figuratively speaking. I think of James Farrell, for example, but he, unfortunately, spoiled it all by insistently calling attention to his own denial of the Great Journey. Let the writer find his vein and exploit it. If it's not Hollywood, let him stay on Twelfth Street or in Cleveland or Sioux City, and there let him do the best he can with his intentions and his equipment. But if it doesn't pay off, why send him to Hollywood where he will only become more bitter as he realizes he is doing something he didn't want to do in the first place?"

"You're rationalizing," he said. "You want to go back but first you want to make sure it's acceptable to your conscience."

"Perhaps," I said. "That may be part of it. But I also should like to see an old misunderstanding corrected. Contrary to what you may believe, it takes ingenuity and some persistence to supply a camera with eighty-five minutes of non-stop images. A large body of men have spent considerable time learning how to do that properly, learning a certain technique."

"I suppose there was technique in that abortion we saw tonight, hah?" he leered, closing in.

"No," I said glibly. "And for that we can blame the American audience as much as Hollywood. Did anyone sitting out there offer a criticism or rise up in its defense? D'you suppose anyone went back to his tent to write Hurry-Up Pictures, Inc., demanding more thoughtful movies? Or that enough of them will make themselves heard? Indifference is the national vice. After all, most audiences get just about what they deserve. Why pick on the screen writers, few of whom have any illusions about turning out ageless drama?"

You can see how I was carrying the torch around in those days, lighting up some very dark places, but my friend wasn't one who was easily persuaded. It went on like this every time we met. Occasionally I fed him the lines. It always ended in an impasse. No resilience anywhere.



It was more than three years before I saw my friend from Brooklyn College again. By that time the war was over. Meanwhile, I had had a fine opportunity to see a good many motion pictures in a variety of Army and Navy theaters from Labrador to India, and it had occurred to me that a whole new generation now existed which might look at the cinema with an entirely different attitude when it arrived home. It was really remarkable the way the Americans overseas went for the movies: no matter how uncomfortable the theater, or old the picture, the thing to do was to go and to look. Maybe it was a subconscious effort to be identified with home, then again maybe it was just a way of combatting the

boredom of behind-the-lines life in a strange land. The important thing was that several million men and women took it all very seriously. I didn't feel it was presumptuous to think they might carry the habit back to the United States when it was all over, and, if they did, it could possibly be encouraging to anyone who was sincere about leading them back to a different kind of reality. Whether or not that actually happened, I can't say. But I can say that I never witnessed any spontaneous demonstrations for or against (1) musicals in which the poor but honest ingenue wins the star role during dress rehearsal, (2) comedies in which the plot hangs on a misunderstanding between the hero and heroine over who is going to do what to whom, and (3) any pictures at all.

So the war ended and we prepared to go home and pick up where we left off, as though it were going to be as simple as that. I was hard put to it to salvage even a moral from the whole business. And then, on one of the last flights, I ran into my Brooklyn friend on the island of Santa Maria, in the Azores. There had been considerable change everywhere since last I had seen him on the edge of the jungle in Africa. The officers' club we were in was an example of that. It was an earnest effort to reduplicate and combine an Omaha hotel lobby and a Pittsburgh cocktail lounge, but it succeeded only in being a little depressing. No matter where Americans go in the world, even in war, they must carry America along with them. But there were comfortable chairs and inoffensive murals in this club, and a horseshoe bar with Portuguese champagne. It was December of 1945 and everything seemed anti-climactic.

"Well," my friend said, aiming the champagne cork at a captain he disliked, "I suppose you'll be back in never-never land shortly."

"Of course," I said, "I understand Odets is in Hollywood. And Harold Clurman."

"Men must eat," he replied sagely, "... and revise their opinions. What do you know now that you didn't know three years ago?"

"Well," I said, "it looks like a long tough winter."

"You have concluded, then," he concluded, "that it's hopeless? That you should come to New York?"

"No," I said. "I'm going back to Hollywood. There isn't going to be any revolution of taste in America. I assure you that's not a paradox."

"Okay, go ahead," he said, "but you'll be back with saddle sores."

His warning had lost all the old sting, however. He no longer poked his finger in my eye for emphasis.

"Well," I said (I begin a lot of conversations with interjections, a hangover doubtless from the days when, less certain of myself, I sparred around for time to compose my thoughts), "it seems like a fairly good way to earn enough money to be free to criticize people for the way they earn money. And then, of course, it's always stimulating to be a member of a national minority, even when the minority is wrong, which is seldom, as you know."

Then I told him the parable of the Arab acrobat. This Arab became one of the most accomplished acrobats in all Eurafrica, and in due time he came to America and joined the circus, where his fame grew to even greater proportions. Although he had been born into extreme poverty and had never had a coin of his own until he was 20 years old, he was now an immensely wealthy Arab, wealthier even than the sultan of his native province. When he had amassed more than a million dollars by tumbling, writing how-to books, and endorsing cigarettes, he retired and went back to Morocco. In the course of time he lost all his money in a scheme to dig a canal across the Sahara, and he was at last reduced to guiding visitors through the native quarter of Casablanca. For a small, additional token he would also perform a triple back somersault in which he landed squarely on his head instead of his feet. One day, an affluent but skeptical American, to whom the Arab had told his story of former opulence, said to him: "If you're so talented, why don't you go back to the United States and rejoin the circus?" "And pay all that income tax?" the Arab said. "No thanks." In the end, the tourist business fell off and the Arab was forced to go and live with his brother, a charlatan who was trying to develop a tangerine which consisted of nothing but seeds.

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And so I came back to Hollywood, chased the silverfish and spiders out of my old room, and got down to work. In less than three months I received a letter from my friend, postmarked Rome.

"Have you rewritten *The Informer* yet?" the letter concluded. "Incidentally, I've got a hell of a swell idea for a story. There's this guy. . ."

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B O O B Y T R A P S

MORRIS E. COHN

YOU are on XYZ Pictures' payroll, and during a flat spell in the conversation you tell your producer the outline of a story which you wrote several years ago and have been treasuring for that long postponed sabbatical when you expect to make a play of it. Your producer says it sounds good, and he'd like to see it. So the next day you show it to him, and you and he discuss it, naively enough, with the time clock ticking away the minutes for which you are being paid by XYZ.

A week later your producer says, how would you like to write that play on XYZ's payroll? Or maybe, how would you like to write a screen version for XYZ?

Or, say you write for radio, you are a staff writer for BCD, and you are in a production conference. The network is hardpressed to fill a spot, and the requirements are generally a fictive version of one of last week's headlines with five minutes of music. You suddenly remember that while you were sweating it out in Tunis or Paluan two years ago you jotted down an outline for a format which would just fill the spot. You tell it. They say, great! and you and the director and the advertising agency and others go to work on it. BCD winds up with a long term contract to broadcast the show.

Who owns your original story, idea, format, conception, or creation produced on your own time? What are your rights in the play, screenplay, or show produced from your material on company time?

If you sign the release form which your employer requires, that is, a release of all rights in all literary work submitted by you to your employer, — and who does not? — you will certainly be in trouble trying to assert any rights in the original or in the finished product. Even if you

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do not sign that release form, you may nevertheless, in the absence of an indelible understanding to the contrary, lose the right to your own property by going to work on it while being paid for your time. Your original conception has been poured into final form, like one fluid into another, and it is impossible to separate them. You will be met with legalisms, such as, implied donation, and continued employment as a **quid pro quo**.

Let's be clear about this. Your agreement with your employer entitles him to your services in creating ideas. (Whether this **should** be so is a question in another field; I am discussing the legal consequences of forms of employment contracts ordinarily in use.) If you do not perform the work of a writer, which at least includes if it does not mean **creating**, then you are not performing your contract. But living up to such a contract does not include the gift of your property. Rendering services as a writer does not include conveying literary property which was in existence before your employment commenced. To transfer a story or an idea you own is a sale or an assignment of rights in a chattel. To be employed is to render services for the benefit of another, and the fact that those services may produce a story does not alter the nature of the arrangement. The distinction between the two is perfectly plain. The difference between matter and energy, which is still good physics except on a sub-atomic level, is likewise good law.

One of the easy tests is when the property came into existence, during the employment or before? It is a metaphysical problem of alluring complexity to determine the moment when a creative idea detaches itself from the matrix of matter and memory. The product of most adult minds is probably fabricated almost entirely from earlier fruits, and these in turn from earlier still, and so on. Fortunately, the practical problem is not so difficult. When the conception is given identifiable form, so that the boundaries which separate it from the wordless and shapeless flow of mentation are distinguishable, that is the point at which for most purposes the work is deemed to have come into existence. Putting it on paper or on wax is a good way to do it. This helps not only to recognize the critical moment but also to prove it to others.

Then, if your employer asks you to work on your material, you can make a decision. If you have lost interest in it as a property and are

willing to give it away, or if you are eager to transfer it in exchange for the opportunity to get it produced, why then, those are courses of conduct of which conscientious lawyers and exacting business agents might well approve. But if that is not your intention, then don't work on it, don't even by acquiescence authorize your employer to put other writers on it until you have a clear inflexible understanding concerning your right to the original material, your rights in the finished product, and your right to adapt your material for other media.

★ ★ ★

SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD STUDIO CHAIRMEN

COLUMBIA — **Melvin Levy**; Ted Thomas, alternate.

M-G-M — **Isobel Lennart**; Sonya Levien, Osso Van Eyss, Polly James, William Ludwig, Robert Andrews, stewards; Paul Wellman, Arch Whitehouse, alternates.

PARAMOUNT — **Abe Polonsky**; Francis E. Faragoh, alternate.

R-K-O — **Arthur Ross**; Bess Taffel, alternate.

REPUBLIC — **John Butler**; Betty Burbridge, alternate.

20th CENTURY-FOX — **Val Davies**; Wanda Tuchock, alternate.

WARNER BROS. — **Ranald MacDougall**.

★ ★ ★

DEATH TOLL: 1946

★ 1946 has been a bad year for famous writers: since the loss of Theodore Dreiser at the turn of the year, the literary world has suffered the deaths of Booth Tarkington, whose *Alice Adams*, *The Magnificent Ambersons*, *Penrod* & *Sam*, and other works, made memorable films, as well as winning him the Pulitzer Prize; Gertrude Stein, leading experimental writer, whose final play, *Yes Is For a Very Young Man*, was premiered at Pasadena this spring; Channing Pollock, outstanding popular philosopher and inspirational writer; and H. G. Wells, sometimes unkindly called "the greatest of second-rate writers" but whose scientific prophecies made him one of the most important voices of our time and many of whose literary works are destined to remain alive for a long time.

Things to Come and other films were based on his many novels. In his recently-published *Writers and Writing*, Robert van Gelder prints an interview with Wells, in which the author of *The Outline of History* is quoted as saying: ". . . Something told me when the checks came in with that little space alongside that is the receipt, to write in a line above my signature, 'for first serial rights only.' . . . That was very intelligent, for it gave the magazines no further rights in the stories, and I've sold them many, many times over ever since. And for much better pay." In addition to the loss sustained by the Republic of Letters, we can be certain that the American Authors' Authority lost in H. G. Wells a man who would have been one of its staunchest supporters.

COMMUNICATIONS

A PLEA FOR URBANITY

Garrett Graham

As one of the senior, if not most successful or widely known, members of the writing trade in Hollywood I would like to raise a mild and perhaps even quavering voice for more urbanity in the policies and conduct of the Screen Writers' Guild.

At several meetings and in several recent issues of the Guild's excellent magazine, *The Screen Writer*, individual members have taken out after other members because of their personal views. Mr. A. has been denounced as a Communist, Mr. B as a Fascist, Mr. C as an Anti-Semite, and Mr. D as a crafty and scheming Zionist.

Supposing all these accusations are well-founded, what the hell difference does it make to the Screen Writers' Guild?

This absurd irrelevance reached its peak at the last general membership meeting when Fred Niblo, Jr., took the floor during the discussion of James M. Cain's sound proposal for an American Authors' Authority, and took more umbrage than was good for him over the political views of certain members of the Board of Directors. I do not remember all of those he mentioned by name, but the bull's-eye of his venom seemed to be Dalton Trumbo.

It is my misfortune that I do not enjoy the personal acquaintance of either Mr. Niblo or Mr. Trumbo. I have been told that each one is the more or less unofficial spokesman for opposite points of view on political and religious matters. It is their personal privilege to think as they wish on any subject under the sun, and to expound their views to all on whose hands time hangs so heavily that they will listen. But the Guild is not the place for such disputes.

The Guild is not a political organization or forum. It is a thoroughly sound and necessary business association whose func-

tion is to safeguard the rights and privileges of those writing for the motion picture industry. It is not, or should not, be at war with, or mad at, any other branch or organization of the industry. It should not take sides in political or legislative matters except when these impinge upon the welfare of writers. It should not indulge in personalities.

Yet there seems to be a growing tendency to divide the membership into Right and Left Wings with an unleavened mass of middle-of-the-roads in between. This is more than ridiculous. It is dangerous because it vitiates the force and dignity of the organization.

It just so happens that I am not a Communist and do not believe there is any Communist menace in America. My two grandfathers were moderately prosperous farmers in northeastern Illinois, were contemporaries of Lincoln, and helped found the Republican Party. They were also felons according to existing laws of those times, because they were prominent in the Underground Railway and gave sanctuary to many an escaping slave on his flight to Canada.

My father was a wheelhorse of the Republican party in Southern California some thirty-five years ago. Although I could never quite stand with the rabid party members who were strongly in favor of infantile paralysis simply because the late President Roosevelt was against it, I strung along with the Republican Presidential nominees until 1944, when I could not stomach the malevolent and seditious forces backing the smug little nincompoop from Albany.

I merely mention this to fend off any accusation that I am one of the sinister Hollywood tools of Moscow who give poor Mr. Hearst so many sleepless nights. If some of the more hysterical protectors of the realm scream at me to go back where I came from, they're posing a difficult problem because my last ancestor of record to arrive in this country was a Johnny-Come-Lately who landed in 1728, and I'm not quite sure where HE came from.

But the increasing frequency with which the charge is hurled that the Com-

GARRETT GRAHAM, a screen writer of long standing, is the author of a famous novel about Hollywood, *Queer People*.

munists are trying to take over the Screen Writers' Guild and the entire motion picture industry as a step toward the domination of America by Russia is as preposterous as the A.P.A. propaganda of my youth that every Catholic Church was an arsenal and the Knights of Columbus were drilling secretly for a military coup that would move the Pope into the White House.

I had my first job in the motion picture industry nearly twenty-seven years ago. Since then I have been in and out of it from time to time as a press agent, film editor and title writer in the silent days; and since the advent of talking pictures I have mucked about occasionally in their writing and production in Hollywood, New York, London, Paris and Berlin.

In all this time I have never seen the slightest crevass through which any Communist propaganda could possibly trickle to the screen. Motion pictures are big business, controlled from Wall Street. Even the most autocratic studio head in Hollywood is a mere chore boy for the financial powers that direct the major companies and the theater chains.

Granting that Mr. Trumbo—and I use his name as a symbol the same as I do Mr. Niblo's—is the foul Red fellow that Mr. Niblo seems to think, there is no conceivable way that he could inject his political beliefs into a commercial motion picture. With all of his local power and authority, if Darryl Zanuck ever let a writer get away with that the Chase National Bank would immediately collapse upon him, and his name would be Ichabod—a sad little man indeed, departed from glory.

It's as simple as that. It doesn't matter a hoot what the individual members or the Guild as a whole think about Communism or Catholicism, Democracy, the folly of drawing to an inside straight or putting bananas in the refrigerator; their personal views will not reach the screen if they are contrary to those of the financiers who control the screen. Mr. Niblo, and those for whom he speaks, can lean back and relax. Mr. Trumbo cannot

get at them cinematically to destroy their way of life until the Chase National Bank goes Communistic. And that I must stick around to see.

It is difficult to understand how any author in *compos mentis* could fail to support and work for Mr. Cain's proposed American Authors' Authority—just as a matter of enlightened self-interest. The producers quite properly are solidly organized to present a united front on matters of mutual interest. So are the nation's doctors, lawyers, bankers, meat packers and practically every other trade, profession and industry. If it is Communistic for writers to get smart and try to salvage more of the usufructs of their trade, then the Johnston Office and the National Association of Manufacturers are also snuggling under the mantle of the Red Menace.

I have had my name on five published books, two of which were best-sellers some years ago; three were bought for pictures, and the other two are reposing in the oblivion they justly earned. Of the three bought for pictures none of them was produced. The reasons for this are not germane here. According to the custom which still prevails, I had to sign away all my rights in perpetuity to these three books. The production of one or more of these would have enhanced greatly my earning capacity as a screen writer, and increased my royalties as an author.

Had I leased them, with the stipulation that ownership would revert to me in a given time, I might have been able to realize something on their motion picture potentiality. As it is, the producers who bought them are out of pocket for having paid for something they didn't use, and I'm out of pocket, too. They can afford it better than I.

I have recently finished a new novel. If any studio should want to buy this, I'll be in approximately the same position I would if I should unhappily find myself in the ring with Joe Louis. We would each be intent upon beating the other's brains out, but the issue would not remain long in doubt.

When and if I should be lucky enough to step into a producer's office to haggle over this new piece of merchandise I have created, it will be with the cold-blooded understanding that each of us will try to take the other's eye out and eat it for a grape. But the odds are just as heavily against me as if I were fighting Joe Louis. In either case I'd like to have with me a platoon of the Marines with whom I served in the Solomon Islands in the recent war; or the American Authors' Authority backing me up.

At the risk of making all my Republican ancestors whirl in their graves, I'll state that if this be Communistic I said it, and I'm glad.

The frenetic outburst of Mr. Wilkerson in The Hollywood Reporter that a vote for Mr. Cain's proposed plan would be a vote for Joe Stalin should be weighed for exactly what it's worth. The producers are not our enemies. They're as much entitled to have a house organ as the Screen Writers' Guild.

As for Mr. Wilkerson himself, some close friend should tell him that a too eager beaver can sometimes embarrass those with whom he tries to curry favor. There is an Elizabethan term with which those hardy oldsters derisively tagged a henchman who followed too closely behind his liege lord. Assuming the readers of this magazine are civilized and intelligent adults, not easily shocked, I shall risk an accusation of vulgarity by repeating that term here. Such a henchman was known as a "catch-fart." Somebody should tell Mr. Wilkerson. Maybe someone should tell Mr. Niblo, too.

ARE WE OR ARE WE NOT . . . ?

Adele Buffington

ARE we or are we NOT COMMUNISTS and/or fellow travelers???? That is a MIGHTY question these days, particularly if you are a screen writer and can READ as well as write! But HOW MANY

ADELE BUFFINGTON is a former member of the Executive Board of the SWG and of the Editorial Committee of The Screen Writer.

SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD MEMBERS are having any opinions or concern at all about it as of this date, August 20th, 1946???

I, for one, have some DEFINITE opinions about it and I AM concerned to a point of fear and anger and just plain nausea at the manner in which published attacks are beginning to make ALL OF US seem like Moscow disciples and stooges, if not in fact. And I think I'm ENTITLED to express those opinions as thoroughly and frankly as I know how after serving more than a five months' sentence at hard labor for some 1300 fellow screen writers, on the Executive Board and the Negotiating Committee of SWG and the Editorial Committee of the Screen Writer.

I don't mean that "sentence at hard labor" just literally, either, because one of the reasons I resigned from all three nearly four months ago, on May 2nd, was on account of the utter futility of functioning intelligently and honestly and tirelessly WITHOUT MEMBERSHIP INTEREST AND SUPPORT!!!

That brings me promptly back to that mighty question. I do not KNOW who IS a Communist or fellow traveler in the SWG. I may have my personal hunches and suspicions or whatever-you-choose-to-call-it, but I don't go around accusing people on anything so fickle and fragile as hunches and suspicion.

I am very sure that insofar as the Executive Board is concerned we are represented by some very honorable, well-meaning, non-radical, 100% American individuals. I am also quite certain we have a number of intellectual snobs in SWG who might have the idea they were "chosen" to lead the masses which doesn't necessarily mean they are actually lugging "Party" numbers around in their pockets or consciously "voting for Stalin." It could be that they are just plain staggered by the light of their own brilliance.

Now this is what I DO know and I know it from an INFORMED position: I KNOW that the MAJORITY OF ACTIVE SWG MEMBERS (and I have a similar feeling about our Associate Members) are NOT Communists or fellow

travelers!!! How do I know it? Because they ARE TOO CONFOUNDED LAZY to be Communists!!! They are TOO PRONE TO LET-THE-OTHER-GUY-DO-IT to be Communists! Or TOO INDIFFERENT to be Communists! Or TOO FULL OF FEAR to be Communists — or even fellow travelers!

If there IS any justification at all for these published attacks, it's got to be laid right in the laps of at least sixty-nine percent of the ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP! They and THEY ALONE are BASICALLY AT FAULT because they are either following like economically unstable SHEEP who do not possess the power of voice, nor the courage to even write a letter to help PROTECT what they BELIEVE IN — or they are so economically SECURE they consider themselves UNTOUCHABLES, with neither the time nor the inclination to exercise the strength and prestige of THEIR voices and THEIR pens to help SAFEGUARD the FUNDAMENTAL AMERICAN PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES OF THEIR GUILD!

Both are too LAZY, too INDIFFERENT or too FULL OF FEAR to exercise ALL the rights of their SWG CONSTITUTION. Most of them, I am sure, haven't even READ it to determine its POWER, its RIGHTS and its ADVANTAGES and if it is SURVIVING or CAN survive the wear and tear of modern times and ideologies that are ALIEN to its fundamental principles and purposes — or if it needs OVERHAULING to safeguard against or combat these alien forces!

Both are too LAZY, too INDIFFERENT, or too FULL OF FEAR to TURN OUT EN MASSE to elect guild executives they BELIEVE IN and then STAND BY THEM, tell them WHO THEY ARE, what their PROBLEM is, what their guild OPINIONS are — and in return DEMAND to be KEPT INFORMED on ALL SIDES of ALL issues, particularly those they are asked to VOTE on!

Both are too LAZY, too INDIFFERENT, or too FULL OF FEAR to STAY UNTIL THE LAST DITCH of meetings they DO attend, but go walking out and rolling home to slumber like BABES or stupid OSTRICHES! In fact, most of them

couldn't do much good there anyway because their INERTIA has made them inarticulate and because they DON'T KNOW A PARLIAMENTARY RULE from Grandmother's yardstick. Then "comes the dawn" — or DOES it?

Both are too LAZY, too INDIFFERENT, or too FULL OF FEAR to exercise their talents for something besides fame and fortune or bread and butter — and get that something in the pages of their official guild "mouthpiece" — the Screen Writer Magazine. I KNOW because in my first weeks on the Executive Board, when I blasted the props out from under that cursed, ill-advised "Action Writer" classification of writers, (or THOUGHT I did, beginning with the Editorial on the subject) my ensuing program that was designed to establish a better understanding and sense of MUTUAL responsibility among ALL SWG members, top-fighters and little guys alike, FELL FLAT ON ITS FACE! It flopped miserably because in that special little niche of mine on the Editorial Committee I could NOT GET OUT OF THE ENTIRE SWG MEMBERSHIP more than TWO solicited articles and ONE unsolicited article — and one scurvy letter attacking the acceptable solicited article. I could not even get one letter DEFENDING the guild-loyalty of the article, beyond the author's reply to the attack, although I INVITED them in bold black, editorial type! Nor could all the cajoling and begging of our Director of Publication help me out.

Yes, at least sixty-nine percent of my fellow screen writers (that's the authentic figure that generally never even shows up at meetings) have told me by their behavior that they CAN'T POSSIBLY be Communists or fellow travelers because you simply can't be lazy or indifferent or afraid and be a Communist or fellow traveler. As I understand it and I think correctly, you have to WORK LIKE HELL to be a Communist — or even fellow traveler — and you have to KEEP AT IT with all the DESIRE and FERVOR reflected in the color of red — and with all the COURAGE and RUTHLESSNESS that we so-called Action Writers have to put into those dastardly heavies who simply

MUST make life miserable for the good, wholesome all-American people in "our town." (I don't mean to be facetious about the latter but under the circumstances I can't think of a better way to describe it.) And you don't get DISGUSTED and GIVE UP either, if you're a Communist or fellow traveler — you don't because you have LOTS OF COMPANY TO BACK YOU UP!

It should also be obvious WHY, as an individual with a REAL STAKE in my guild and its power over my very economic existence and my reputation, I am FRIGHTENED and ANGERED and NAUSEATED by these attacks that are putting me and the majority of my fellow writers under a disreputable blanket of ACCUSATIONS AND SUSPICIONS which are CONTRARY to everything WE BELIEVE IN and WANT — and which we must recognize is a DISGRACE to the industry we represent!

We either have a guild and principles that we ARE LOYAL TO or we HAVEN'T! We either have self-respect and enjoy the pride of being good, wholesome all-American people in our town — indeed in our whole wonderful, free country or we haven't ANYTHING and might as well roll over and GO BACK TO SLEEP!

IF the MAJORITY of SWG members are CONVINCED their guild is NOT controlled by Communistic influences as is being charged so widely and disastrously, they they should DEMAND of their Executive Board that some CONCERTED and COLLECTIVE ACTION be taken to DISSPROVE these charges!!!

Certainly, I nor anyone else needs to tell them that you CAN'T WASH A DIRTY SHIRT BY IGNORING IT — or by SNEERING at it!!!

ON DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Jean H. Lenuer

Frankly I am a little shocked. Having read The Screen Writer for the last few

JEAN H. LENUER, newspaperman, exhibitor and producer, over the past 20 years, is now working as a producer for the Signal Corps.

months, I was pleased to see that the magazine treated questions that interest filmmakers in a serious and realistic sense. But in the July issue, I find a most supine and pious article about the potential future of documentary films.

I am referring to the article entitled THE DOCUMENTARY FILM ERA. In it the author expresses convictions that private interests will, with the possible gain of thousands of dollars in view, see to it that the documentary film, which received an enormous helping hand during the war, continues.

Not that there is basically anything wrong with people hoping and wishing, but this is 1946.

There is no discussion or program of how this would be achieved. Nor is there the slightest indication that the author has bothered to look around or examined the very noticeable trend of the last few months. Had he done that, he would undoubtedly have come to a quite different and highly disappointing conclusion.

What has transpired in this year since the Japs threw down the towel?

The WAC, which used to be the coordinating committee between war agencies and the exhibitors and distributors, is out of existence. The newly formed ATA, an independent exhibitors' association of recent vintage, has made it fairly clear that it does not intend to help bring before the public any documentary films made by the War agencies or other government departments. The recent argument about SEEDS OF DESTINY seems to indicate clearly how the wind blows there.

The State Department is restricted to make films for overseas only. Though the OWI was in the same predicament during the emergency, it was able to get some of the Capra films and other outstanding documentaries before the American public. Obviously the State Department can't duplicate that situation.

The patriotic fervor is gone and the exhibitors once again presume to tell you what the public wants to see or not.

The major companies have embarked on a rather vast program of 16mm exploitation and within the needs of such

a program will perhaps make use of documentaries. Note however the curious fact that not one of them intends to do anything **yet** about the North American continent.

What other channels are there? The unions have made some valiant efforts to bring to their membership a greater understanding of the world around us by using educational and documentary films. Yet even here we find a hesitant and intermittent approach that does not bode well for the documentary.

For it is by now practically an axiom to say that documentary films grow only in an atmosphere of continuity. Not only for the inner satisfaction of the craftsman who wants his films to be seen, but for the absolute necessity to improve his work by the assured way of learning by repeated experience.

We are told that the public does not want to see those films. In spite of the unprecedented success of the documentary series at the Museum of Modern Art, I haven't read any announcement that a commercially sound basis has been found to bring these important films before a greater public.

One could multiply the samples to show that Mr. Meadow's conclusions are based on wishful thinking and not on reliable or substantiated facts.

That there is a crying need for imagi-

native treatment of factual filmreporting there is no doubt. In other countries war-created filmagencies continue. Private enterprises get government help or subsidies.

Or we find that the unions have a vast program and ways of paying for it.

I hold no brief for one method in preference to another. But I'd like to know more precisely what kind of private enterprise the author had in mind when he promised these things and what information he has kept hidden that permits him to assume this attitude?

There are a great number of competent and eager filmmakers today in this country who'd give their eye teeth to work on documentary films for the incentive that Mr. Meadow dangles so tantalizingly before their eyes. Some of them have long established artistic reputation, some have learned their unrewarding metier in the war years. I am quite sure that I express their thoughts when I ask the writer of the July article: Where oh where is that private enterprise that will give them a chance to report cinematographically about what they see and know? Where oh where is that private enterprise that will permit them to work creatively in this trade. They would prefer this infinitely to the humdrum stupid jobs they have to accept today because they see no other way to make a living.

FACTS AND FIGURES

The charts on the following two pages, like those printed last month, were prepared for the Screen Writers' Guild by the National Labor Bureau of San Francisco, under the direction of Henry P. Melnikow.

These charts will continue to be a monthly feature of *The Screen Writer*. Last month, our figures covered corporate profits of the major studios; this month, they go into the problem of average and total writer-employment, with the fluctuations in numbers employed, and the arresting fact that a bare third of the number of available screen writers constitutes the "average" number employed, while annual totals show employ-

ment of just over one-half the available number of writers.

Later charts will break down the numbers of writers in various salary brackets, and frequency of employment in these brackets, and other over-all figures dealing with the problems of writers and of the industry as a whole.

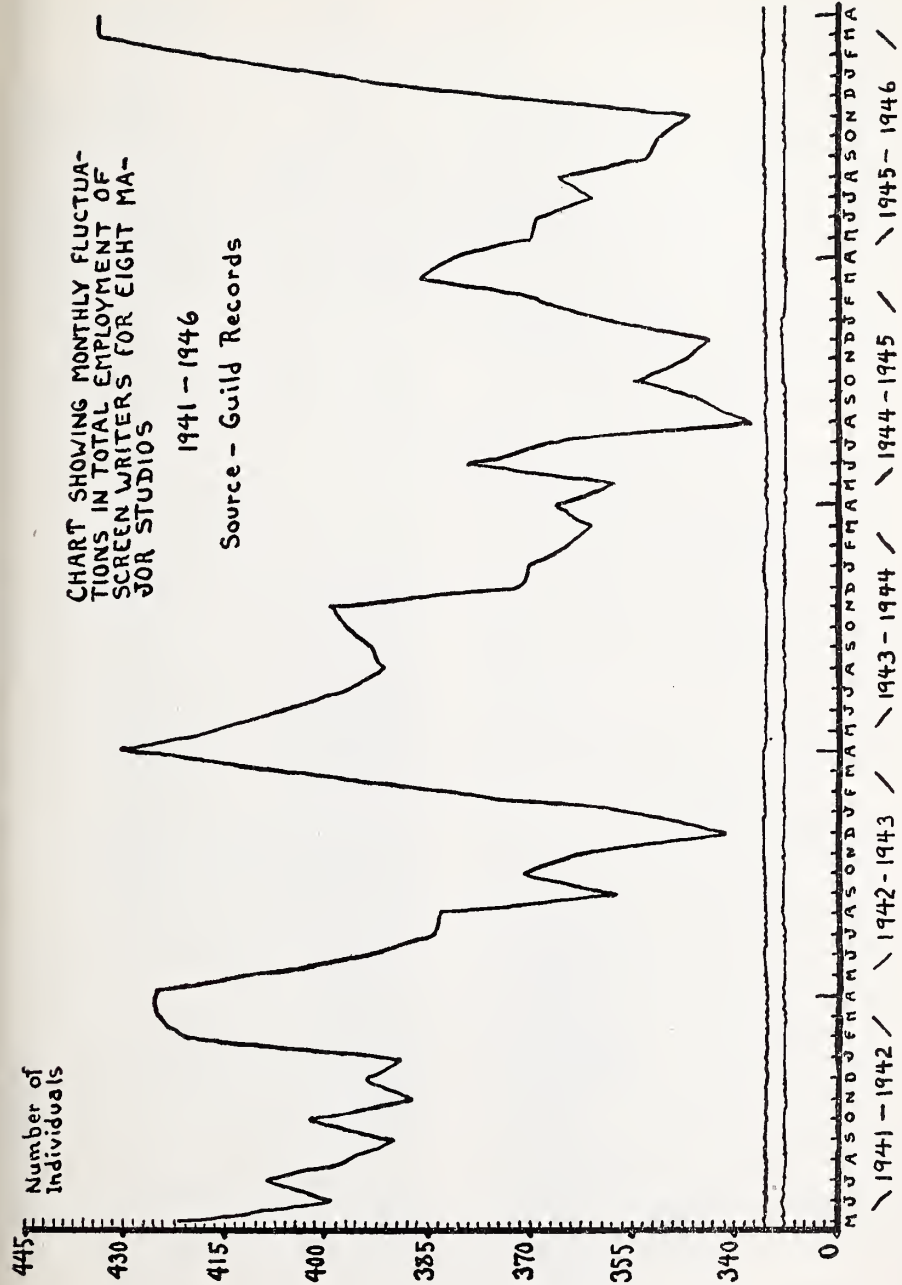
It is felt that a close study of these charts may afford, to Guild members, to members of other guilds and unions in Hollywood, and to interested outsiders, a better understanding of the true economic condition of screen writers, too often dismissed in biased newspaper reports with some such phrase as "palatial homes and splendiferous swimming pools."

Number of
Individuals

CHART SHOWING MONTHLY FLUCTUA-
TIONS IN TOTAL EMPLOYMENT OF
SCREEN WRITERS FOR EIGHT MA-
JOR STUDIOS

1941 - 1946

Source - Guild Records



Number
of
Screen
Writers

1400
1300
1200
1100
1000
900
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0

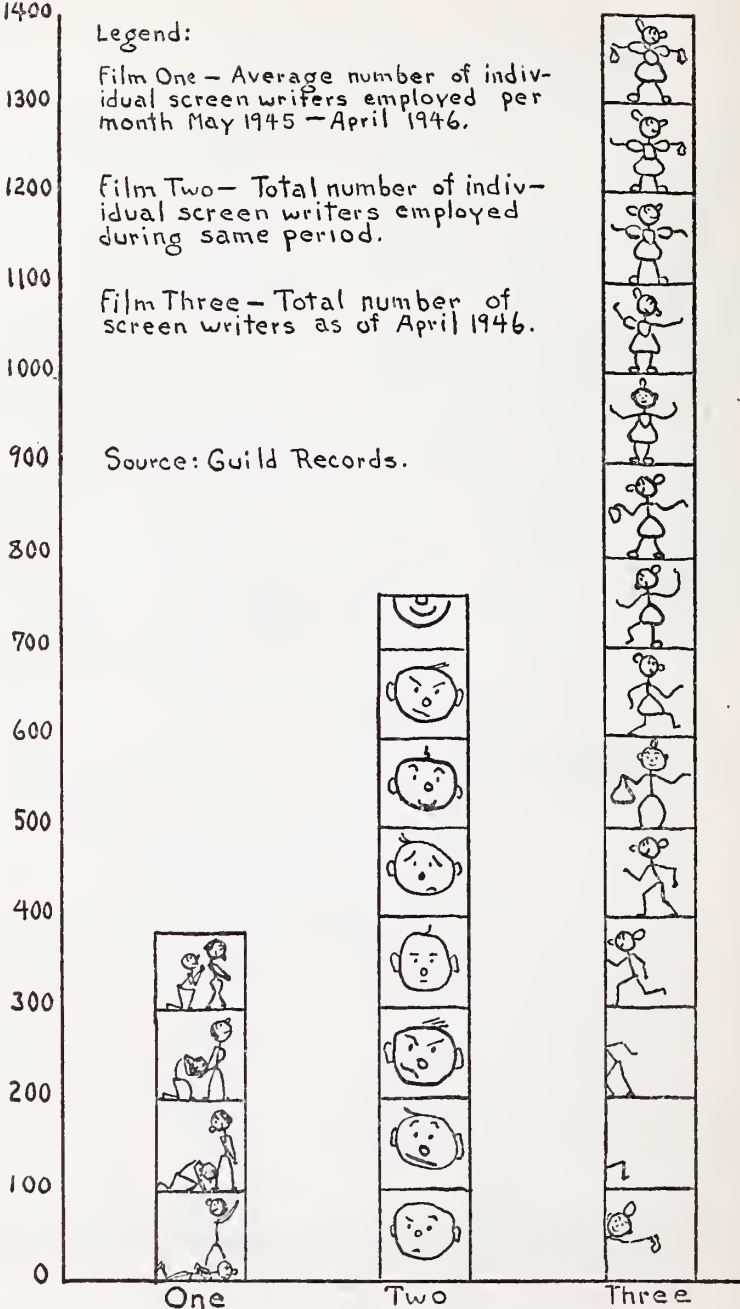
Legend:

Film One - Average number of individual screen writers employed per month May 1945 - April 1946.

Film Two - Total number of individual screen writers employed during same period.

Film Three - Total number of screen writers as of April 1946.

Source: Guild Records.



S . W . G . B U L L E T I N

THE FRENCH-AMERICAN FILM AGREEMENT

Following passage, at the July 29 Membership Meeting, of SWG's resolution requesting the State Dept. to look into the possibilities of renegotiating the French Film Agreement, Emmet Lavery received the following letter, dated Aug. 8, from Eric Johnston:

Dear Mr. Lavery:

I am profoundly disturbed by the implication of a resolution which I understand was recently adopted by the Screen Writers Guild.

According to information received from our Hollywood office, this resolution said in part:

... "that the Screen Writers Guild, in answer to the appeal of the French film workers, expresses its opinion of the French-American film agreement and asks our State Department to investigate the possibility of re-negotiating this agreement so that the French film industry can survive."

The plain implication of the resolution is that the agreement recently negotiated by our government and the French government is a threat to the survival of the French film industry.

I believe there is absolutely no basis for the unwarranted assumption that the agreement threatens the extinction of the French film industry and I believe further that such an assumption casts an undeserved reflection upon the good faith of the American and French officials who negotiated the agreement for the two governments.

The guild's resolution, in effect, distorts so completely the purpose and meaning of the agreement that I believe a clarification of its provisions is vitally essential. With that in mind I shall set forth briefly why it was adopted and the purposes which it is designed to achieve.

The moving purpose behind the agreement was a desire to promote the ideal of world unity by removing some of the restrictions which isolate one nation from

another by Chinese Walls of nationalism. The motion picture is a primary medium for the exchange of ideas between people. I have always believed that excessive nationalism breeds war; that a freer exchange of goods, services and information is a healthy offset to the friction which causes war.

As for the specific conditions of the agreement relating to the motion picture, I believe that any fair-minded person will agree that the terms set forth actually protect the development of the French film industry and give it a greater measure of protection than it had before the war.

For example, every theatre in France must reserve at least four weeks playing time out of every thirteen solely for French pictures. During the remaining nine weeks of the quarter, the theatre is free to play foreign pictures or French pictures whichever it prefers. The free playing time is not reserved for American pictures—it may be used for the exhibition of Russian films or British films or French films or the films of any other nation.

Actually the agreement does not guarantee the exhibition of a single American motion picture in France. It simply opens the market to the best pictures.

Before the war, the American motion picture industry annually supplied between 150 and 155 "dubbed" feature pictures for the French market. Since the agreement, however, the eight leading American companies voluntarily agreed to release not more than 124 "dubbed" features in the French market annually. The number of feature pictures with superimposed titles which have a limited distribution in France will be substantially smaller than before the war. This should reassure anyone who honestly believes that the American industry is preparing to flood the French market with films produced here during the war period.

The observation of Monsieur Leon Blum, an outstanding French patriot who aided in negotiating the agreement, should be sufficient answer to the accusation that the agreement is against the

best interests of the French producing industry. In a statement, quoted in the American press on June 29th, Monsieur Blum said:

"In renouncing the 1936 pact, the United States made a considerable concession in agreeing to let France keep exclusively four weeks out of every thirteen for French products, assuring 30% of the playing time. When negotiations started, the French hoped to get a seven weeks quota, but after long discussion France did well in comparison to a 17% guarantee granted to Italy and a 22% accord with Britain."

Monsieur Blum added:

"There is not a word in the accord to prevent an exhibitor from showing 100% French films if he wishes. What is needed is for the French film industry to produce films pleasing to the public."

"Film interests here must remember the Washington accord would assist in the reestablishment of the French film industry. The French industry will aid in every way."

You may be interested in knowing that when the loan agreement was up for approval in the French Assembly, the only spoken opposition to the film provisions came from a few communist deputies. It is obvious to me why French communists wish to keep out American motion pictures which reflect American democratic life.

I do not for a moment challenge the right of the Screen Writers Guild or any other group to ask the State Department to renegotiate the existing film agreement with France. That is simply the exercise of an American fundamental right.

But the implication that the government of the United States or the American film industry took undue advantage of the French film industry is both naive and false. I challenge it.

I am giving you these facts in the interest of fairness and accuracy.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) ERIC JOHNSTON

Guild Reply

After thoroughly going into the matter once more, on the basis of all the docu-

ments received from heads of French trade-unions and other personalities, Mr. Lavery, in cooperation with the SWG Executive Board, drafted the following reply, dated Aug. 23:

Dear Mr. Johnston:

Thank you for your letter of August 8th, with its detailed defense of the French-American film agreement. You ask for facts and I am happy to present them herewith.

May I point out, in passing, that the Screen Writers' Guild at this moment does not presume to pass judgment upon the merits of this agreement? In response to an appeal from the screen writers and the film workers of France, it is simply making a comprehensive effort to appraise the ultimate effect of this agreement upon the film industry of France.

Our French colleagues say that the agreement will mean the gradual extinction of the French film industry. You say that nothing of the kind is contemplated; that, far from restricting French playing time in French theatres to four out of every thirteen weeks, the agreement "guarantees" to French films four out of every thirteen weeks.

But here, as in all trade agreements, the impartial observer has to look beyond the immediate words used. Some of the saddest treaties in the history of the world have been replete with "guarantees." The basic question always remains the same: what will happen to the individual or to the country concerned? And who is the best judge of the actual contemporary effect of these "guarantees"? Those who drew up the agreement or those who have to live under it and work under it?

For your information, I should like to note that we have been trying to get the answers to these questions for some time.

As far back as July 8th, I asked the office of Mr. Joseph Schenck at 20th Century-Fox to give us any information that he might have.

Mr. Schenck's office had called the day before to ask whether there was any possibility of the Screen Writers' Guild taking affirmative action in support of

the British loan. I promised to take it up with the Board immediately.

Under date of July 7th, the Guild advised Mr. Schenck as follows:

"We are at present in receipt of communications from writers in France to the effect that conditions attached to the United States loan to France restricting showing of French films in that country may lead ultimately to the destruction of the French film industry. We are studying this charge with concern and will welcome any information you think we should have to clarify our understanding of the situation."

On the same day, in a telephone conversation with Mr. Schenck's office, I covered the same two points. I explained that, while many members of the Guild would undoubtedly support the loan as individuals, the Guild would probably be reluctant to do anything as a Guild, because of the collateral political issues involved in the Congressional debates on the loan.

I never got around to talking with Mr. Schenck but while I had his office on the telephone, I renewed our request for information on the French loan. I took it for granted, naturally, that, if Mr. Schenck knew all about the British loan, he knew all about the French loan too.

For some reason, still unfathomable to me, the gentleman at the other end of the telephone found it difficult to treat the inquiry with any seriousness. He assured me that France would be perfectly happy making only 35 films a year, that there weren't enough good French films to go around, and besides the French people would rather see American films anyway.

In the July issue, we published in *The Screen Writer*, the official magazine of the Guild, an open letter from Henri Jeanson, Secretary General of the French National Federation of Authors and Composers, and President of the Union of Screen Writers. Monsieur Jeanson made the flat declaration, "French films are being assassinated."

The industry generally had ample opportunity to study this letter as did the whole membership of the Screen Writers'

Guild. The item was listed prominently in the formal call for the meeting and the floor of the Guild was open for the widest possible discussion of the issue.

After a full presentation of the question by Harold J. Salemsen, the Guild's director of publications, the meeting voted unanimously to ask the State Department whether there was any possibility of renegotiating the agreement.

This was not a hasty or an uninformed action. Nor was it an unfriendly action, designed to embarrass the Motion Picture Producers' Association of America. It was the sincere action of American writers who are justly proud of the achievements of the American screen, but who also respect and admire the good work of fellow craftsmen of all countries and of all languages. We see, as you have seen, that the screen is one of the greatest mediums for peace throughout the world—but we also see that there has to be peace first among those who will project the dream of peace on the screens of the world.

It so happens that our ties with France are no less tangible than those of the Producers' Association, perhaps even a bit more tangible. We do not lease theatres and distribute films in France but many of our members' plays and novels have been translated there, as in turn many of theirs have been translated here. Mr. Salemsen, for instance, was the choice of the United States Army for chairman of the committee of senior officers and civilians on propaganda to Southern France during the invasion of two years ago. I myself am currently represented in the repertory of the *Comedie Francaise*. Vladimir Pozner, distinguished novelist recently returned from France, has long been a prominent member of our Guild as well as the Guild in France. And so it goes with many of our members. The community of interest among writers of all nations increases year by year. And, trade papers to the contrary notwithstanding, Stalin has nothing to do with it.

So much for general background. In the light of it, let us examine your statement: "The moving purpose behind the

agreement was a desire to promote the ideal of world unity by removing some of the restrictions which isolate one nation from another."

But **does** the agreement achieve this particular ideal? In the August 15th issue of the *Hollywood Reporter* you will find an item describing a parade of French workers, in which large banners carried the slogan, "DOWN WITH AMERICAN FILMS."

If the agreement is so good for France, why do the French workers resent it so?

You insist that "the terms set forth actually protect the development of the French film industry and give it a greater measure of protection than it had before." How—and in what way?

Under the pre-war agreement, a limit was put on the number of foreign films imported into France and the French were thereby assured of approximately 50% of their playing time. Does anyone seriously maintain that the French will have that much under the new agreement? Your own report indicates the opposite.

Consider also: before the war France, with double features, could use 300 films a year, some 120 being of her own production. Today, with single features legally imposed on all theatres, she can take only 160 features at the most. Of this number the American industry has already dubbed 124, leaving only a maximum of 36 for the French. So even the French estimate that 48 French-made films a year might be possible under the new agreement seems nothing but a very slim hope.

You speak of "free playing time" in the nine weeks per quarter not restricted to French films. But French films, in this "free playing time," must compete at top rental rates (in order to pay off their investment) with American films already paid for in the United States, and therefore offered at far lower rental to French exhibitors. Through block booking, American distributors can grab the nine "free" weeks on the basis of one good film which a French exhibitor wants, and eight American films that he has to take whether he wants them or not. Is this

what we mean by "free competition"?

You say "the agreement does not guarantee the exhibition of a single American motion picture in France—it simply opens the market to the best pictures." This is ingenious but hardly realistic. After all, we are talking about France, which is the primary market for French films, and about protection for French films made in France. Unless the French films have in the first instance enough playing time to survive, it doesn't matter how much "free competition" you permit afterward—they just can't meet the competition on your terms. Naturally, we are interested in the widest possible market for good American films throughout the world, but the issue here is not a matter of concern for American films as such, any more than it is a matter of concern for Russian, British, or other foreign films in the French market. The immediate issue is the matter of assuring sufficient FRENCH films for the French in France.

Add to this the fact that, while France today will consume about one half of the films she took before the war due to suppression of double features, the American industry is planning to release in France two-thirds or three-fourths as many as we did before the war. If this doesn't come close to "flooding the market," just what is it?

And what happens after two years of the Agreement? The official text of the document says:

"If, in any two-year period ending on June 30, 1948, or on June 30 of any subsequent year, feature films produced in France should obtain total playing time in French theatres equal to or greater than the average of five (5) weeks per quarter, the screen quota shall automatically be reduced to three (3) weeks per quarter effective October 1 following the expiration of such two-year period. If, through the operation of the above formula, the screen quota should be reduced to three (3) weeks per quarter, it shall continue at the operation of the following automatic formula: If, in any two-year period ending on September 30, during the whole of which period a

screen quota of three (3) weeks per quarter is in effect, feature films produced in France should obtain total playing time in French theatres equal to or greater than an average of five (5) weeks per quarter, the screen quota shall be entirely abolished effective January 1 following the expiration of such two-year period."

Does this augur well for the healthy development of the French film industry? Does this provide "a greater measure of protection than it had before?"

Finally, U. S. producers will earn about five to eight million dollars per year in France, of which the French government can afford to allow the export of only three million. Our producers will therefore reinvest two to five million dollars per year in the French motion picture industry which, in a few years, will thus have ceased to be French. And with the creation of such American production in France we can well foresee the reduction of employment in Hollywood—an eventuality which most vitally concerns our members.

I have the greatest respect for Monsieur Leon Blum as a citizen of France and as a citizen of the world. And since he was the one who had to negotiate the agreement, I would expect him to stand by it at all times. But, as a writer curious to know something of the inner workings of the French film industry, I am much more impressed by the words of Henri Jeanson, President of the Screen Writers of France.

M. Jeanson characterizes the agreement as a "contract dictated by men who knew exactly what they wanted to a man who, let us hope for his sake, did not very well know what he was writing."

This view is shared by many distinguished members of the French film industry and, for your further information, I submit herewith the judgment of several, as translated from documents received from France under date of June 14:

ANDRE LUGUET, President of the National Union of Actors: "We knew very well when Mr. Blum went to Washington that he would have to give up

something. . . But I must confess that no one of us ever dreamed that our poor industry would be made so brutally and so cruelly to pay the freight."

RAYMOND BERNARD, famed director and President of the Association of Film Authors (Directors' Union): ". . . the French cinema has been condemned to death. This result is the inescapable conclusion of the recent agreements concluded between France and the United States."

GEORGE SADOUL, film critic: "I believe that this agreement threatens to be fatal to the French cinema. . ."

CHARLES CHEZEAU, Secretary of the National Cinema Branch of the Federation of Entertainment Industries, a section of the General Confederation of Labor: ". . . Our future government (must) take action as soon as possible and obtain from the American government the protection which we have asked for. . . That is the only valid solution in order that we may in a few years, as it is stated so well in the Agreement, 'regain our competitive strength.' Except for this solution there will no longer really be any French cinema: it will have disappeared entirely or have been taken over. . . Our trade union organizations have made the decision to get to work with all our strength so that this special motion picture agreement be **immediately revised**. It is necessary to save the French cinema and to guarantee the right to existence to all workers, all creators, and all technicians of the French motion picture industry."

M. CHERET, expert accountant and a member of the Committee of the Monnet Plan (for the Modernization and Re-Equipment of French industry): "If we cannot make more than 50 films per year we may very soon see at least a third of our technicians unemployed. If we do not obtain at least 50% of the playing time on our screens we will not be able to make more than 50 films, at the very most."

HENRI JEANSON, Secretary General of the Society of Composers and Authors, and President of the Screenwriters' Union: "Hollywood has obtained from the representatives of France what M. Greven,

the Nazi director of the Continentale Company, would never have dared ask of us during the occupation."

M. BOUZANQUET, Secretary of the General Confederation of Labor of France (and, I am quite sure, an official of M. Leon Blum's own Socialist Party): "The C.G.T. (General Confederation of Labor) will stand beside you (the motion picture trade-unions) to help you and to bring about the winning of this demand which consists, before the unanimous condemnation of the agreement concerning the French cinema, in seeing to it that this agreement be revised and that you have the possibility to defend your right to life and to defend the influence and prestige of France."

JEAN GREMILLON, well-known film director and President of the Union of Motion Picture Production Technicians of France: "We find ourselves simply faced with so great a restriction on our freedom of action that it gravely threatens what we thought permanently ours: the possibility of expressing ourselves as much in the number of messages sent out as in the extent of the audiences they might reach."

LOUIS DAQUIN, General Secretary of the same union: "In reality, — we must have the courage to say it, — America is forcing its films upon us, for commercial reasons of course, but especially to take advantage of the influence that can be exercised by the prodigious and powerful means of expression represented by the cinema."

LOUIS JOUVET, France's most distinguished stage and screen star: "The American agreement has for immediate and inevitable consequence the putting to sleep of our studios, our technicians, our best directors and our actors. This is an inexorable fact. We can only face it."

M. FROGERAIS, President of the French Union of Film Producers: "I believe that if we come to an understanding, which we must do at once to fulfill our task, which is to keep our motion pictures alive, we will succeed in spite of everything. I can assure you in the name of all the independent producers that we

are not going to quit now that the battle is joined."

From all this you may gather that I too am interested in "fairness and accuracy" and in pursuance of that interest I ask quite sincerely: "how do you evaluate **this** testimony?"

I note with interest your observation that, when the loan was debated in the Chamber of Deputies, the only opposition came from "a few Communists." I have no way of knowing whether this was so. But supposing it were, what probative value would it have in this discussion? Do you mean to imply that, in or out of France, it is **only** Communists who have asked a question about the French-American loan?

I would assume, if your report is correct, that a sizable number of Communist deputies — perhaps a good third of the Chamber — must have voted to support Monsieur Blum and the agreement.

So, in the last analysis, more Communists would have voted to support the agreement than voted to reject it. More Communists stood with the American producers than stood against them.

And yet all this is clearly irrelevant. The question at issue is not who is for and who is against the agreement. The only question is: how much life does the French industry have under the agreement?

If you have any further information on this subject, I should be delighted to forward it to our membership without delay. In fact, we would be very happy to have you come to one of our meetings and spend an evening discussing this and many other timely subjects.

You will remember, when you first took office, I extended an invitation to you on behalf of the Guild to appear at a Guild meeting and I take this opportunity of renewing the invitation.

I think a great deal of good could be achieved if you would sit down for an evening with the screen writers of this industry and discuss some of the problems on which we are currently working.

We would like very much to have your personal reactions to the licensing program for the disposition of original ma-

terial, to the current proposals for an American Authors' Authority — as well as some further word on the industry's plans (if any) for the returning writer veterans. Since our last conference with you on June 22, 1946, when you assured us the industry had a "moral responsibility" in the matter to fully accredited writers, we have made no gains. The problem is exactly where you left it.

Finally, we would value greatly the opportunity to have your reaction to the wave of "red-baiting" which has been flooding the editorial pages of the country with respect to our licensing program and our plans for an American Authors' Authority. In particular, we would like to have your opinion on the current activities of a self-constituted spokesman for the industry — Mr. W. R. Wilkerson of the Hollywood Reporter. Do you approve or do you disapprove the revival of his slanderous attacks upon the Guild? Ten years ago he was writing the same vicious diatribes and today he is repeating the same routine. Now, as then, he could not afford to publish the Reporter without the generous advertising support of most of the studios in Hollywood. And so I ask you: **does** Mr. Wilkerson speak for the industry, and if he doesn't, when is someone going to say so?

All these questions and many more we are eager to discuss with you. Will you let us know if there is some time soon when we could set aside a whole evening for a personal conference between you and our whole membership?

You really ought to know us better. We're really quite reasonable people.

With all good wishes and the hope that we may see you at an early date,

Sincerely,

EMMET LAVERY, President,
Screen Writers' Guild

At press time, there had been no further reply or comment from Mr. Johnston or the Motion Picture Association.

ADELE BUFFINGTON RESIGNATION

Adele Buffington, former member of the SWG Executive Board and of the Editorial Committee of The Screen Writer, resigned from both of these positions, as of May 2, because of differences of opinion with the Executive Board. Complete file of Miss Buffington's statement of resignation and allied correspondence is available at the Guild office for any Guild member interested in going into the matter in detail.

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C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

OPINIONS ON THE AAA

From the many letters, from SWG members and non-members alike, expressing opinions on the American Authors' Authority, here are a few that struck us as particularly worthy of quotation.

Clifford Odets writes:

I am for any plan which will help writers keep more of their income, even tho I think such a plan is only half of the story, the other half being not a plan so much as a sense of how to make American writing less fraudulent. In my

sense, the writer should be close to the old designation, "Priest," so you can see what a half measure it is to say, "How much cash do I get out of this? Let's make a better cash plan!" Why, it is no measure at all, but a shameful confession of the sterility of American letters. This statement made, I am all for the "plan" and see of course its necessity.

Richard G. Hubler, who feels there is a need to "filter the issue," writes in part:

. . . Most of the discussions of the AAA overlook the basic fact of it. . . A writer is a creator. What he creates be-

longs to him; it is the product of no one else. The rights of exploitation in his creation belong naturally to him.

It is an analogy as simple as that of a couple having a child. That creation is theirs. It cannot be taken away. . .

. . . What the author wants and what the AAA promises to give him is a Magna Carta for writers. For individuals to struggle against corporations is useless. Organization must be met with organization. Authors must pool as little as possible of their individuality but they must pool enough to make it feasible to defend their rights in what they produce.

It is a matter of simple justice, too long overlooked.

Samson Raphaelson writes from Pleasant Valley, Pa.:

That American Authors' Authority article by Cain is terrific. Though I may have to spend most of the year here in the East, I want you to know I'm behind it to the hilt and will do everything in my power to help. . . I'm delighted that the Guild endorsed the plan so overwhelmingly, and I hope to live to see the day when it goes into effect. Count on me as being behind it without qualification.

Another pledge of support from Peter Rhodes:

I thought Cain's article laying down the Authors' Authority plan was smack on the button, and I'll back it as far as I can in the organizations here to which I belong. . .

Arthur Kober avers:

The Authors' Authority idea sounds wonderful. No one can have a play produced without being a member of the Dramatists' Guild. The Authors' Authority sounds like an extension of this idea and with added benefits yet!

Norman Burnside conjures up his present picture of writers going penniless while their films play the screens of the world and appealing to Old Scrooge for help. He says:

The American Authors' Authority is the most wonderful thing for writers I've yet heard about. But if it goes through it may cause me to forget my favorite Christmas tableau. . . A lot of writers

. . . will not have the opportunity to meet all the nice people who work at the Motion Picture Relief Fund.

Better think it over, writers, before you act too impulsively.

More serious misgivings are voiced by Dana Platt, of Los Angeles, who writes us:

An American Authors' Authority is a splendid, and long overdue project. I notice, however, that there is no mention of newspapers nor of the American Newspaper Guild. Surely, in order to be effective, the Authority will have to cover the newspaper and syndicate field. Consider, for instance, the case of the correspondent, columnist, or Sunday feature writer who decides to collect some of his items and publish them as a book. If the newspaper or syndicate holds the copyright, won't this conflict with the A.A.A.?

I also am painfully aware of this little item: "the Authority will receive material for copyright . . . only from members in good standing of their proper guilds-". If that is to be the procedure, then the guilds will have to relax their qualifications for membership, either that or the copyright service of the Authority will have to be open to every writer on a fee basis. I am thinking, of course, of the dilemma of a certain beginning writer, an unfortunate soul who has not yet published his first short story, - but in order to publish it, must copyright it through the Authority, - but in order to copyright it through the Authority, must join one of the guilds, - but in order to join one of the guilds, must publish his first short story.

This letter is being turned over to the AAA Committee for study. However, it can already be said that members of the American Newspaper Guild are studying the feasibility of extending its protection to their craft, and as for the often-repeated fears that AAA will bar new writers from the field, there is no such plan in the minds of those who are working out the details of AAA, nor could any such plan be conceivable, in a field which admittedly lives on the development of new talents.

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NEWS NOTES

★ Pasadena Playhouse closed its season Aug. 18, winding up the Midsummer Drama Festival which included eight seldom-staged plays by Clyde Fitch. Playhouse will reopen Sept. 30 with a revival of F. Hugh Herbert's teen-age comedy, *For Keeps*. . . Scheduled for a tryout production later in the season at Pasadena is a new play by SWG member Harry Essex, *House of Ivory*.

★ SWG member Fred Schiller has sold a novelette, *Ten Men and a Prayer*, to McCall's *Blue Book*, for late Fall publication. . .

★ A new novel by Editorial Committee member Theodore Strauss, *Moonrise*, will be brought out by Viking in October. It is listed as a Book League choice for December or January.

★ Stanford University has presented SWG member Malvin Wald with the Stephen Vincent Benét Award for the best radio play of 1946. The play, *As Sound as a Bell*, written in collaboration with Pamela Wilcox, has been bought by the CBS program, *Suspense*. This is Wald's second award from Stanford: last year, *Father Was President*, a three-act play written with SWG member Walter Doniger, won the Stanford award for the best comedy of the year. *Father Was President* will open late this month at the Phoenix Theatre, in Westwood Village, with Albert Dekker starring and directing.

★ Los Angeles author and film critic Frank Cunningham has a new book, *Big Dan, the Story of a Colorful Railroader*, just published by The Deseret News Press, Salt Lake City.

★ SWG member Eugen Sharin, just back from two years with the Army, has had his new version of *Sindbad The Sailor* published by Duell, Sloan & Pearce. No connection with the forthcoming film of the same title, but his publishers report that present stocks will be exhausted before the picture reaches the screen. Another printing, with the same illustrations by Oscar Fabrès, is being prepared

by The Hyperion Press, for the British market. While abroad, Sharin was Chief Films Officer for the U. S. Army in Austria—a job he admits having relished. For once a writer had the Will Hays-Eric Johnston spot, bossing studios, production, distribution and exhibition!

★ FOREIGN GUESTS — Sidney Gilliat, writer-producer and an influential member of the British Screenwriters' Assn., was a guest in Hollywood during the month, and met with a number of SWG members at a rapidly-improvised cocktail party at the home of Michael Hogan. Gilliat expressed deepest interest in the magazine, SWG's problems, and the prospect of AAA, in which he assured us that all British screen writers would concur 100%. On his return to London, he will present to the Association the present status of AAA and explore the possibility of their supporting it, as well as going into the question of closer ties with SWG and broader dissemination of The Screen Writer among members of the Association. . . Lau Shaw and C. P. Wan, the two distinguished Chinese writers whom we entertained last month, and who have submitted some really exciting material for a future issue of The Screen Writer, are continuing their U. S. tour in the Northwest, after which they will return to New York.

★ For a vastly amusing account of Democratic politics in California, as they are practiced at the top level, see contributor Martin Field's Mr. Scully Goes to Sacramento, in The Hollywood Press-Times, Aug. 2. It is also a good indication of SWG member Frank Scully's growing importance among Democrats of the state. . . In the Aug. 6 issue of the same publication, Milton Luban comments: "Steve Fisher . . . has his portrait on this month's Writers' Digest, the first time an author's face has ever decorated the magazine's cover. If things like this keep happening, the studios are liable to get the idea that maybe writers are rather essential to the motion picture industry. . ."

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A LISTING OF SCREEN WRITERS' CREDITS
EARNED ON FEATURE PRODUCTIONS
OF CURRENT AND RECENT RELEASE

CREDITS

JUNE 9, 1946 TO AUGUST 20, 1946

A

GERALD D. ADAMS

Joint Original Story (with Richard Sokolove)
THE MAGNIFICENT ROGUE, REP

FRANKLYN ADREON

Joint Original Screenplay (with Basil Dickey,
Jesse Duffy and Sol Shor) SON OF ZORRO,
REP

MICHAEL ARLEN

Character Basis THE FALCON'S ADVENTURE,
RKO

FRANK ARNOLD

Joint Adaptation (with Seymour Bennett)
THE SHORT HAPPY LIFE OF FRANCIS
MACOMBER, UA (Award Prods.)

B

VICKI BAUM

Sole Story HONEYMOON, RKO

EDMUND BELOIN

Joint Original Screenplay (with Jack Rose)
MY FAVORITE BRUNETTE, PAR

CHARLES BENNETT

Joint Screenplay (with Frederic M. Frank and
Jesse Lasky, Jr.) UNCONQUERED, PAR

DOROTHY BENNETT

Joint Screenplay (with Leonard Praskins)
THE HIGH WINDOW, FOX

SEYMOUR BENNETT

Joint Screenplay (with Casey Robinson) and
Joint Adaptation (with Frank Arnold) THE
SHORT HAPPY LIFE OF FRANCIS MACOM-
BER, UA (Award Prods.)

EDWIN HARVEY BLUM

Joint Original Screenplay (with Don Hart-
mann) DOWN TO EARTH, COL

CHARLES BRACKETT

Joint Original Screenplay (with Billy Wilder)
THE EMPEROR WALTZ, PAR

MONTE BRICE

Joint Screenplay (with Isabel Dawn)
SINGIN' IN THE CORN, COL
*Contributor to Screenplay PERILS OF PAUL-
INE, PAR

*Academy Bulletin Only

GEORGE BRUCE

Joint Screenplay (with Alfred Neumann)
THE RETURN OF MONTE CRISTO, COL
(Edward Small)

C

JERRY CADY

Sole Screenplay BOB, SON OF BATTLE, FOX

DAVID CHANDLER

Joint Screenplay (with Peter Goldbaum, Ar-
thur Marx and Gertrude Purcell) SNOW
CINDERELLA, REP (Walter Colmes)

RAYMOND CHANDLER

Novel Basis THE HIGH WINDOW, FOX

ROY CHANSLER

Sole Original Screenplay THE VIGILANTES
RETURN, UNI

ANNE MORRISON CHAPIN

Joint Screenplay (with Whitfield Cook)
SECRET HEART, MGM

ELMER CLIFTON

Sole Screenplay SONG OF THE SIERRAS,
MONO

ROCKIES, MONO

Sole Screenplay RAINBOW OVER THE
ROCKIES, MONO

HARRY CLORK

Joint Screenplay (with Allen Rivkin and
Devery Freeman) THRILL OF BRAZIL, COL

JOHN COLLIER

Joint Screenplay (with Joseph Than) DE-
CEPTION, WB

WHITFIELD COOK

Joint Screenplay (with Anne Morrison
Chapin) SECRET HEART, MGM

D

ISABEL DAWN

Joint Screenplay (with Monte Brice) SINGIN'
IN THE CORN, COL

KAREN DE WOLF

Sole Screenplay THE COCKEYED MIRACLE,
MGM

BASIL DICKEY

Joint Original Screenplay (with Franklyn
Adreon, Jesse Duffy and Sol Shor) SON OF
ZORRO, REP

COL — Columbia Pictures Corporation; FOX — Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation;
MGM — Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios; MONO — Monogram Pictures Corporation; PAR —
Paramount Pictures, Inc.; PRC — Producers Releasing Corporation of America; REP — Republic
Productions, Inc.; RKO — RKO Radio Studios, Inc.; UA — United Artists Corporation;
UNI — Universal Pictures Company, Inc.; UWP — United World Pictures; WB — Warner
Brothers Studios.

JESSE DUFFY

Joint Original Screenplay (with Franklyn Adreon, Basil Dickey and Sol Shor) SON OF ZORRO, REP

PHILIP DUNNE

Sole Screenplay THE LATE GEORGE APLEY, FOX

ROBERT DUSOE

Novel Basis THE DEVIL THUMBS A RIDE, RKO

E**CYRIL ENDFIELD**

Sole Screenplay MR. HEX, MONO

SAMUEL G. ENGEL

Joint Screenplay (with Winston Miller) MY DARLING CLEMENTINE, FOX

F**BERNARD FEINS**

Joint Original Story (with Frances Hyland) THAT'S MY GAL, REP

MICHAEL FESSIER

Joint Original Screenplay (with Ernest Pagano) TRIPOLI, UNI

LEWIS R. FOSTER

Sole Original Screenplay I WONDER WHO'S KISSING HER NOW, FOX

FREDRIC M. FRANK

Joint Screenplay (with Charles Bennett and Jesse Lasky, Jr.) UNCONQUERED, PAR

DEVERY FREEMAN

Joint Screenplay (with Allen Rivkin and Harry Clark) THRILL OF BRAZIL, COL

G**GERALD GERAGHTY**

Sole Original Screenplay APACHE ROSE, REP

Joint Original Screenplay (with Julian Zimet) HELLDORADO, REP

PETER GOLDBAUM

Joint Screenplay (with David Chandler, Arthur Marx and Gertrude Purcell) SNOW CINDERELLA, REP (Walter Colmes)

FRANCES GOODRICH

Joint Screenplay (with Albert Hackett and Frank Capra) IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE, RKO (Liberty Films)

JAMES EDWARD GRANT

Sole Original Screenplay THE ANGEL AND THE OUTLAW, REP

H**ALBERT HACKETT**

Joint Screenplay (with Frances Goodrich and Frank Capra) IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE, RKO (Liberty Films)

NORMAN S. HALL

Sole Story RIO GRANDE RAIDERS, REP

VICTOR HAMMOND

Sole Original Story TRAIL TO MEXICO, MONO

JULIAN HARMON

Sole Story THE GLOVED HAND, COL

DON HARTMANN

Joint Original Screenplay (with Edwin Harvey Blum) DOWN TO EARTH, COL

SAM HELLMAN

*Additional Dialogue WHITE TIE AND TAILS, UNI

Sole Story MY DARLING CLEMENTINE, FOX

JOSEPH HOFFMAN

Sole Screenplay THAT'S MY GAL, REP

*Academy Bulletin Only.

NORMAN HOUSTON

Sole Screenplay CODE OF THE WEST, RKO

K**MacKINLAY KANTOR**

Novel Basis THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES, GOLDWYN

ROBERT E. KENT

Additional Dialogue THE FALCON'S ADVENTURE, RKO

LAWRENCE KIMBLE

Sole Screenplay and Joint Adaptation (with Arthur Ross) BEAT THE BAND, RKO

L**ANDE LAMB**

Joint Original Story (with Louise Rousseau) LONE STAR MOONLIGHT, COL

RICHARD H. LANDAU

Sole Story SECRET OF THE WHISTLER, COL

JESSE LASKY, JR.

Joint Screenplay (with Charles Bennett and Fredric M. Frank) UNCONQUERED, PAR

WILLIAM LIVELY

Sole Screenplay GUNMAN'S CODE, UNI

LEE LOEB

Sole Original Story and Joint Screenplay (with Mary Loos and Richard Sale) CALENDAR GIRL, REP

STEPHEN LONGSTREET

Sole Screenplay and Novel Basis STALLION ROAD, WB

MARY LOOS

Joint Screenplay (with Richard Sale and Lee Loeb) CALENDAR GIRL, REP

SHERMAN L. LOWE

Joint Story (with Arthur St. Clair) GUNMAN'S CODE, UNI

Sole Adaptation THE MAGNIFICENT ROGUE, REP

Joint Story (with Victor McLeod) THE RUSTLER'S ROUND-UP, UNI

DANE LUSSIER

Sole Screenplay THE MAGNIFICENT ROGUE, REP

M**LOUELLA MacFARLANE**

*Contributor to Screenplay BELLA DONNA, International

ARTHUR MARX

Joint Screenplay (with Peter Goldbaum, David Chandler and Gertrude Purcell) SNOW CINDERELLA, REP (Walter Colmes)

WINSTON MILLER

Joint Screenplay (with Samuel G. Engel) MY DARLING CLEMENTINE, FOX

BERTRAM MILLHAUSER

Sole Screenplay WHITE TIE AND TAILS, UNI

N**JACK NATTEFORD**

Sole Screenplay THE RUSTLER'S ROUND-UP, UNI

Joint Original Screenplay (with Luci Ward) TRAIL TO SAN ANTONIO, REP

ALFRED NEUMANN

Joint Screenplay (with George Bruce) THE RETURN OF MONTE CRISTO, COL (Edward Small)

P**ERNEST PAGANO**

Joint Original Screenplay (with Michael Fessier) TRIPOLI, UNI

NORTON S. PARKER

Sole Screenplay RIO GRANDE RAIDERS, REP

ARNOLD PHILLIPS

Joint Story (with Curt Siodmak) THE RETURN OF MONTE CRISTO, COL (Edward Small)

LEONARD PRASKINS

Joint Screenplay (with Dorothy Bennett) THE HIGH WINDOW, FOX

GERTRUDE PURCELL

Joint Screenplay (with Peter Goldbaum, David Chandler and Arthur Marx) SNOW CINDERELLA, REP (Walter Colmes)

R**MARTIN RACKIN**

Sole Original Screenplay RIFFRAFF, RKO

MILTON RAISON

Sole Original Screenplay SPOILERS OF THE NORTH, REP

THEODORE REEVES

Sole Original Story DEVOTION, WB

ALLEN RIVKIN

Joint Screenplay (with Laura Kerr) KATIE FOR CONGRESS, RKO

Joint Screenplay (with Harry Clork and Dev-
ery Freeman) THRILL OF BRAZIL, COL**CASEY ROBINSON**Joint Screenplay (with Seymour Bennett)
THE SHORT HAPPY LIFE OF FRANCIS
MACOMBER, UA (Award Prods.)**JACK ROSE**Joint Original Screenplay (with Edmund Be-
loin) MY FAVORITE BRUNETTE, PAR**ARTHUR ROSS**Joint Adaptation (with Lawrence Kimble)
BEAT THE BAND, RKO**LOUISE ROUSSEAU**Sole Screenplay and Joint Original Story (with
Ande Lamb) LONE STAR MOONLIGHT, COL**S****ARTHUR ST. CLAIR**Joint Story (with Sherman L. Lowe) GUN-
MAN'S CODE, UNIJoint Screenplay (with George Wallace
Sayre) SORORITY GIRL, PRC**RICHARD SALE**Joint Screenplay (with Mary Loos and Lee
Loeb) CALENDAR GIRL, REP**WALDO SALT***Contributor to Dialogue, A LIKELY STORY,
RKO**GEORGE WALLACE SAYRE**Sole Story and Joint Screenplay (with Ar-
thur St. Clair) SORORITY GIRL, PRC**FRED SCHILLER**Story Basis SNOW CINDERELLA, REP (Wal-
ter Colmes)**RAYMOND SCHROCK**Sole Screenplay SECRET OF THE WHISTLER,
COL**GEORGE SEATON**

Play Basis THE COCKEYED MIRACLE, MGM

HARRY SEGALL

Character Basis DOWN TO EARTH, COL

ROBERT E. SHERWOODSole Screenplay THE BEST YEARS OF OUR
LIVES, GOLDWYN**SOL SHOR**Joint Original Screenplay (with Franklyn
Adreon, Basil Dickey and Jesse Duffy) SON
OF ZORRO, REP

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CURT SIODMAKJoint Story (with Arnold Phillips) THE RE-
TURN OF MONTE CRISTO, COL (Edward
Small)**EARLE SNELL**Sole Original Screenplay OREGON TRAIL
SCOUTS, REPSole Original Screenplay HOMESTEADERS OF
PARADISE VALLEY, REP**DONALD OGDEN STEWART**

Sole Screenplay LIFE WITH FATHER, WB

IRVING STONESole Original Screenplay MAGNIFICENT
DOLL, UNI**JO SWERLING**Additional Scenes IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE,
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Sole Screenplay A LIKELY STORY, RKO

HAROLD TARSHISJoint Screenplay (with Robert C. Williams)
THE ADVENTURES OF DON COYOTE, UA
(Comet)**JOSEPH THAN**Joint Screenplay (with John Collier) DE-
CEPTION, WB**ROBERT THOREN**

Sole Screenplay BELLA DONNA, International

WANDA TUCHOCKSole Original Screenplay THE HOME-
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COL**V****LOUIS VERNEUIL**

Play Basis DECEPTION, WB

W**LUCI WARD**Joint Original Screenplay (with Jack Natta-
ford) TRAIL TO SAN ANTONIO, REP**RICHARD WEIL**

Sole Story SINGIN' IN THE CORN, COL

GEORGE WELLS

Sole Screenplay THE SHOW-OFF, MGM

BRENDA WEISBERG

Sole Screenplay THE GLOVED HAND, COL

BILLY WILDERJoint Original Screenplay (with Charles
Brackett) THE EMPEROR WALTZ, PAR**ROBERT C. WILLIAMS**Sole Original Story and Joint Screenplay
(with Harold Tarshis) THE ADVENTURES
OF DON COYOTE, UA (Comet)Sole Original Screenplay LAWLESS BREED,
UNI**MICHAEL WILSON***Contributor to Screenplay IT'S A WON-
DERFUL LIFE, RKO (Liberty Films)**KEITH WINTER**

Sole Screenplay DEVOTION, WB

AUBREY WISBERGSole Original Screenplay THE FALCON'S
ADVENTURE, RKO**Z****JULIAN ZIMET**Joint Original Screenplay (with Gerald
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RICHARD G. HUBLER • OPINION AND THE MOTION PICTURE
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OCTOBER, 1946

J U S T W H A T I S A . A . A . ?

JAMES M. CAIN

WHEN the American Authors' Authority was first broached, in an article by me in The Screen Writer, a meeting of writers likely to oppose a central authority was called, and it may be assumed, the considerations against such an authority thoroughly explored. About forty writers attended. Their concern was two-fold: First, an honest anxiety that such an authority could be used to control ideas, to exercise some sort of censorship, or even to disseminate propaganda; Second, that it concealed sinister designs on the part of leftist writers, and even, as was openly charged, was a catpaw for Communism, and had been conceived in Moscow.

Two or three days later, a meeting of the Guild membership was held to consider the plan. It was the biggest meeting of writers ever seen in Hollywood, and I imagine the biggest in the history of writing. Some 400 men and women met that night in a spirit new to them. Instead of

This article was given to the International News Service by JAMES M. CAIN on Sept. 13, at the request of that wire service. In order that our readers may see the full text, we herewith reprint this clarification by the author of the original proposal for AN AMERICAN AUTHORS' AUTHORITY.

using the floor for pet personal projects, for the taking of romantic but frequently impractical attitudes, their debate was cogent, sensible, and often profound. The opposition completely collapsed, and one of the main leaders of it spoke briefly, in part as follows: "After thinking about it and learning more about it, I'm in favor of this thing, because I've become convinced it has no political purpose of any kind, but is simply one gang of capitalists trying to get more dough out of another gang of capitalists."

This succinct if somewhat cynical summary explains why I expect the New York opposition to blow up as the Hollywood opposition did, for only seven votes were cast against the Authority when the President called for a show of hands, and only five writers abstained from voting. Some of this New York group, like Rupert Hughes and Kay Brush, and probably many more if the complete list were before me as I write, I count as friends, and to doubt their sincerity in this matter is simply to be silly. Yet, since I do know them so well, I cannot forget their extremely rightist leanings, or fail to suspect that the charges of leftism that have been made against this Authority have something to do with their organization of the American Writers' Association. But it is precisely because they are rightists that they will be compelled, by every consideration of logic and self-interest, to support this Authority that we are setting up.

Well, what is the American Authors' Authority? It is simply a repository of copyrights, to be voluntarily assigned to it in trust, and to be safeguarded in a way that an individual owner cannot safeguard them. Its activities will be three-fold: to keep accurate record of the copyright and all transactions arising under it, and preclude the possibility of the idiotic situation that faces me as I write, since I have accepted \$250 for exclusive reprint rights to some story of mine until a certain date, and now, through a defect in my filing system, I can't ascertain what this date is or even the name of the story; second, as the legal owner of the copyright, to take over all court actions it becomes involved in; third, as the legal owner of the copyright, to maintain lobbies, and vigorously enforce the rights of the copyright in legislation, especially tax legislation.

In other words, we have awakened at last to something that has long been known to publishers, radio stations, magazines, and picture studios: the position of the writer can become really strong only if, in

addition to the conception of him as artist and employee that the guilds maintain, there be an organization which conceives of him as the creator of properties. That is what this thing is all about. And for Rupert Hughes, who is a good hard-shelled Republican, and as such is convinced that property has rights that even the United States government is bound to respect, to be getting off a lot of chatter about monopoly is, with all due respect to an eminent historian, a judge of fine liquor, and the funniest man in radio, somewhat absurd.

The alarm over monopoly is in main part my own fault, and due to a mistake I made in my original article. At that time, being anxious to legitimate the thing foursquare with the guilds, and allay any suspicion we were trying to engorge or supersede the guilds, I said that the Authority would accept any work for copyright, but would first insist that its author join the indicated guild. But the monopolistic possibilities of this were pointed out in practically a shout of protest, from left, right, and middle. I am not talking about the meeting, but of opinion everywhere, that found its expression briefly on the floor of the meeting, and repeatedly in the various gatherings we have had to get on with the project, that the Authority would accept any property, from anybody at all, and utterly regardless of its content, but that any writer who wishes a voice in the management of the Authority must naturally join the proper one of the four guilds that will set it up.

That, in brief, is the story. Some of the things the Authority will not do is attempt to act as the author's agent, or do his collective bargaining for him, or have anything to say about prices, wages, or working conditions. It is as though a lot of independent taxi drivers formed an association, and decided to incorporate and assign the title to the vehicles to the main office which would then take over all lawsuits, insurance claims, difficulties with the police, tax assessments, petitions to the City Council, etc. If a driver wanted to sell his car, the corporation would attend to the legal formalities.

However, the analogy can be carried too far, as taxis depreciate, and eventually fall apart. Copyrights do, too, and many of them have no exploitation value within a week of first publication. But some of them appreciate, and one of the heartbreaks of the writer is to see some property, sold for a song years ago, reappearing repeatedly as the basis of

some picture that every so often makes millions. To take care of that, it is the intention of us who are setting the Authority up, that it shall never sell any of the component rights of the whole copyright during its life, but will lease for a term of years, or license for a single performance, or grant a permission for a reprint, or whatever the form of exploitation might be. At the end of the fifty-six years that a copyright may run, it would still exist in its entirety for the full benefit of the writer or his heirs and assigns.

The slogan I urged on these writers, and have urged on them repeatedly, is the celebrated crack by the late Philip Goodman to an inaccurate cashier in Paris: "And remember, it's not the principle of the thing, it's the money." Eventually, I fear, this view of things might make good Republicans of us all.

(For additional information on AAA in this issue, see box below; Philip Dunne's article, next page; Howard Dimsdale-Guy Endore article, P. 11; Lester Cole's article, P. 20; Editorial, P. 29; SWG Bulletin, P. 33; AAA Press Survey, P. 35; Correspondence, P. 38; and various News Notes, beginning on P. 41.)



THE "NO DISCRIMINATION" AMENDMENT

In good or bad faith, the major part of the criticisms leveled at the American Authors' Authority has hinged on the alleged danger of a "dictator" or a politically-interested group grabbing "control" of all writing in the United States through the intermediary of the Authority.

As a scare argument by those who hide their real reasons for opposing the Authority, this may be a well-reasoned approach. But those who have honest misgivings about the plan on this score can have them only because of ignorance of the facts. In order to clear up such apprehensions, we reprint herewith the exact wording of part of the report on the SWG July 29 membership meeting, as it appeared in *The Screen Writer* for August:

"Stressing that he felt that no issue of control of material was involved, but that some members might wish to have their fears allayed in this connection, Edwin Blum presented the following amendment, seconded by John Wexley, which was passed unanimously:

"That there be no discrimination in the rights or treatment accorded by AAA to any piece of written material by reason of its content.'"

This is the premise on which AAA was originally endorsed. Honest critics need look no further for the answer to their objections.

SWG — TRADE UNION OR WRITERS' PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION?

PHILIP DUNNE

IN RECENT months there has been a great deal of discussion within the Guild as to the exact nature of our organization. It would be an exaggeration to stigmatize the discussion as a dispute, but nevertheless several points of view have developed and each has its eloquent partisans.

The theory of one well-meaning group of members is that the Guild is a trade union, should admit as much, and should forthwith take the logical step of allying itself with other guilds and unions within the industry which have problems and objectives similar to ours.

Another equally well-meaning group holds that we are not artisans but creators, that a guild of writers is not and cannot be a trade union, and that our best interests demand that we avoid entanglements with other industry organizations and strengthen our ties with the Authors' League.

In general, since it seems to be impossible to keep politics out of any discussion of Guild affairs, the "trade union" group has been identified as to the left, and the "Authors' League" group as to the right. Those who like to impute dark and devious motives to any Guild activity say that the "trade union" group would like to see the Guild handed over in fee simple to Herb Sorrell and the Conference of Studio Unions. (I might say at this point that in all my years on the Guild's Executive Board I have never heard put forward even a suggestion that we should ally ourselves with any group which would not include the Actors and Directors.) The "Authors' League" group, on the other hand, is attacked for

PHILIP DUNNE, a member of the Executive Board of SWG and formerly a member of the Editorial Committee of *The Screen Writer*, is a frequent contributor to the magazine.

wanting to dream in an ivory tower while the producers stand below with a half-brick in each hand.

I think I am qualified to write this article because I belong unashamedly to both groups. I think they are both perfectly right in their objectives and, furthermore, that there is nothing incompatible in these objectives.

What the unyielding partisan of either group fails to grasp is that the Guild can and should be a two-edged sword. It can strike with one edge for the screen writer as employee, with the other for the same writer as creator of original material. The attempt to put the two points of view within the Guild into political categories has always been beside the mark. It is no more "leftist" to say that we should strengthen our ties with other guilds and unions than it is "rightist" to work for a closer coordination of activities within the League. Indeed, our latest move in the latter direction, the proposal for an American Authors' Authority, has invoked louder and more frenetic screams of "Red" from our enemies than any proposal originating with the "trade union" group. And what old member has so short a memory as to forget that the producers (and The Hollywood Reporter) used **exactly the same Red smear against our original plan to amalgamate with the Authors' League ten years ago?** You will remember that then we were accused of trying to hand our Guild over to the domination of a group of "Eastern Reds," presumably Fannie Hurst, Robert E. Sherwood, Elmer Rice, Luise Sillcox and the others who were officers of the League at that time.

Since this seems to be the open season for questions, we might ask Mr. Wilkerson, Miss Hopper and Mr. Hearst this one: "What ever became of those 'Eastern Reds'? Did they all move west, or is it just possible that they never existed?"

Although it is not the intent of this article to discuss the recent journalistic attack on the Guild, perhaps at this time the topic is worth a slight digression. It should be perfectly obvious to every member that, whatever we do in the interests of the writer, we are going to be accused of Communism. Most of us, outside of our activities in the Guild, are actively interested in politics, usually on the liberal side. There is nothing unnatural about this.

Writers are political animals. Since, professionally, they are more interested in people than in property, their political sympathies will always lie somewhat to the left of center. They will, in the majority, hate economic injustice, wars and anything that tends to curb freedom of expression and the radical, inquisitive spirit of man. Such views, militantly expressed and energetically acted upon, are far more dangerous to those who wish to concentrate wealth and power in their own hands than is the minuscule American Communist Party. But the Communists, deservedly or not, have become a sort of bogey to frighten the unthinking. It is for this reason that our enemies are trying desperately to pin the Red label on our Guild, on some of its most devoted members and functionaries, and on their perfectly reasonable and legitimate activities on behalf of screen writers.

I think we should dismiss the injection of politics into this dispute for the sham it is. There is only one question the screen writer need answer: "Is what we are doing good for the writer?" To this, I might add another: "How can our Guild best serve the writer?"

In my opinion, it can serve him in two ways:

(1) as a trade union, by negotiating with the producers in 1949 a new Minimum Basic Agreement which will extend and protect his rights as an employee;

(2) as a writers' protective association, by establishing under the aegis of the Authors' League an American Authors' Authority which will extend and protect his rights as a creator of original material.

The first is purely a trade union function. The second is purely a job for a writers' association. The Guild accordingly must make up its mind that it needs to be both these things.

For the past ten years, whatever we have chosen to call ourselves, we have acted solely as a trade union. And, strangely enough, it was the producers who made us so. Our original draft for a writer-producer agreement contained a section concerning the sale of original material to the producing companies. This the producers refused to discuss with us. They had recognized us in the first place solely because they were forced to do so by law: the National Labor Relations Act. This law was designed to protect employees in their right to collective bargaining, not manufacturers' or creators' associations. It was, therefore, only in our legal status

as a trade union that the producers would consent to deal with us.

In all our dealings with the producers since that time, we have been a trade union and nothing else. It will be solely as a trade union that we reopen negotiations in 1948. Admitting that we ARE a trade union, how do we set about being a strong one? By turning up our noses at an alliance with other guilds and unions? I think not. In the strategy of trade unionism, it is axiomatic that the weakest union is the loneliest. Let us illustrate by a hypothetical but potentially concrete example:

It is late in 1948. Our current agreement with the producers is about to expire. Our membership decides that their new offer is totally unacceptable. We say: "No contract, no work." In other words, we do what any trade union MUST do under similar circumstances, we strike. (I hope that this article will not be misinterpreted as advocacy of a strike. A writers' strike, if it should come, will come only as a tragic necessity. Nonetheless we must all face the fact that in the last analysis the strike or the threat of a strike is our most effective weapon.)

Can we, the writers alone (in 1948), close the studios and thus give our strike a reasonable chance of success? In the long run, probably we can. The other guilds in the Authors' League will probably (they are not compelled to do so) vote not to take our jobs. They might even vote to withhold material. Eventually, such a shut-off of the essential raw materials would close the studios. But not right away. It is perfectly true that a permanent boycott of the motion picture studios by the entire Authors' League would destroy this industry as we know it. The producers are well aware of this, and their awareness explains their traditional intransigence towards our Guild. But the power of the League can only work slowly, over a period of time.

Our hypothesis is that we are on strike now. We need help from close at hand, and we need it right away. Our logical course is to request other guilds and unions to respect our picket lines. Will they? Remember that by now the real issues have most certainly been obscured. Our strike is not for what we say it's for, but is nothing but a Red plot to dominate the studios. Or (take your choice) the writers are all millionaires anyway, so why are they striking? Write your own Reporter and Examiner headlines.

What will the other guilds and unions do? We cannot say for sure.

We have no agreements with them; we have been through **their** picket lines; there is no coordination of activities nor unity of purpose. All we can do is hope.

It requires no great knowledge of trade union strategy to grasp the weakness of such a position. And yet this is the position in which we may very easily find ourselves two years from now. Two years is only the day after tomorrow. Perhaps it is already too late to improve our position as of the reopening of negotiations. But what of the future? Certainly we should be in a far stronger position if we were to take the following steps:

(1) As already recommended informally by one membership meeting, that we seek, in concert with the Actors' and Directors' Guilds, to remove the "yellow dog" portion of the no-strike clause from future contracts;

(2) That we seek an understanding with the Actors and Directors whereby each group would undertake, under future contracts, to respect the picket lines of the others;

(3) That these three "talent" guilds agree to consult with each other before taking any major action against the producers;

(4) That hereafter these three guilds endeavor to arrange their contracts with the producers so that they will expire on approximately the same date;

(5) That the three guilds, acting together, hold the door open for similar agreements with other guilds and unions within the industry.

None of these steps amounts to a new affiliation. All of them can be taken by the Guild alone, acting as a trade union in Hollywood, without consultation with the Authors' League. In my personal opinion, and I am not speaking as a member of the Executive Board, they constitute a minimum program for the Guild in its function as trade union. Perhaps you have some better ideas. If you do, let your Board know about them.

In our other function, as a protective association for writers marketing original material to the studios, we have already made a start towards our goal. We should continue to work within the League for the adoption of the American Authors' Authority and the implementation of its objectives.

If you want a strong Guild, accept its natural dualism and work to

strengthen it in both the ways in which it can be of service to writers. We shouldn't pretend that on either road the going won't be tough. The opposition has far more effective weapons in its armory than Mr. Wilkerson's stink-bombs, and it won't hesitate to use them. But, in the end, we have the most devastating weapon of them all. It is Unity. Let's keep it, and let's use it for all it's worth.

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THE FOREIGN SCENE

A distinguished visitor in Hollywood last month was Lubomir Linhart, a film critic of some 20 years' standing, and now President of the Czechoslovak Motion Picture Corporation, the Czech government monopoly in charge of motion picture production, distribution, exhibition and education. The occasion of Mr. Linhart's visit was the signing of a trade agreement providing for the importation of 80 American films per year into Czechoslovakia.

In addition to his official contacts with the Johnston Office, Mr. Linhart visited various studios and got in touch with key individuals in the film-education field, documentary production, and the publication of *The Screen Writer* and *The Hollywood Quarterly*. Details were worked out for cultural exchanges between Hollywood and Prague, not only in the field of respective magazines, but also in the furnishing to the projected Czech Motion Picture Institute outlines of courses given at the People's Educational Center here, and possible cooperation of American specialists in film production in Czechoslovakia.

One of the branches of Mr. Linhart's activities is the Czechoslovak Motion Picture Publishing House, with which, as reported previously, *The Screen Writer* has established a tentative material-exchange deal, and which has accounted for reprinting of several of our features in the Czech press.

The Czech Motion Picture Publishing House puts out the following magazines: *Kino*, an illustrated fortnightly fan-magazine on a high technical and intellectual level; *Ceskoslov. Kinoamatér*, official monthly magazine of Czech film clubs; *Film Card-Index*, a card registry of all films, designed for schools, theatres, public cultural institutions, and interested individuals; *Ceskoslovenska Fotografie*, official monthly magazine of amateur camera clubs; and *Filmova Prace*, weekly bulletin of the Czech Film-Technicians' Union. Other magazines are in the preparational stage.

Among the books and pamphlets published by this firm in Prague are: Charles Spencer Chaplin, edited by Atasheva-Achushkov, including essays by Eisenstein, Kozintsev, Yutkevich, Bleiman, and an autobiography of Chaplin; *Film Art*, by Bela Balasz; *50 Years of Film*, by Dr. B. Radl, a survey of films on their 50th anniversary; *The Art of Choosing a Film*, by O. Kautsky, a guide for picturegoers; and many more.

From elsewhere in the world, the following items: Karl Schlichter's *The Irresponsibles*, published in *The Screen Writer* for March, was the subject of a lengthy comment and digest in the British publication, *Documentary News Letter*, for May-June. . . . A *Question of Morals*, by Harold J. Salemsen (*The Screen Writer* for April), was excerpted at length and commented upon in an article by Denis Marion speculating on Hollywood's approaching mental maturity, in the Gaullist French weekly, *Combat*. . . . The international Film Festival of Cannes is taking place as we go to press. *The Screen Writer* is represented by a correspondent there, and we hope in our next issue to be able to bring our readers a first-hand account of the films shown and the prizes awarded.

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WANT TO BUY THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE?

HOWARD DIMSDALE &
GUY ENDORE

THE two authors of this little article recently got into a discussion regarding something about which they admit they know very little: public domain. They were struck for the first time by the great difference between public domain as regards the arts, and public domain as regards other forms of property and other fields of endeavor. Hitherto the two authors, like most authors, we presume, had taken public domain for granted. But now the injustice of it seemed glaring.

Now neither of us has any legal training, we are neither historians nor statisticians, so don't expect any sort of thorough-going treatment, and don't expect us to reach any iron-clad conclusions. All we hope for is that you will give the matter a little thought.

We did have a dictionary at hand, *The New Century* (1944), and we found therein the following definitions. PUBLIC: "of, pertaining to, or affecting the people as a whole, or the community, state, or nation; open to all the people; not restricted to any person or persons, or any particular class of the community . . ." DOMAIN: "possession or dominion." Thus, PUBLIC DOMAIN: "that which belongs to the people as a whole."

Thus, to take some crude examples, Hollywood and Vine, before someone squatted on it and fulfilled the stipulations of the Homestead

Former SWG chairman at 20th Century-Fox, HOWARD DIMSDALE collaborates here for the first time with GUY ENDORE, author of distinguished works of fiction and biography.

Act, was public domain. Westlake Park and the Brooklyn Bridge are right now public domain. And so is Alice in Wonderland.

But let's look at the differences. Westlake Park was either deeded to the city or purchased by the city from its original owners. The Brooklyn Bridge was built out of public funds. Hollywood and Vine was just desert land until people came and worked it up into something. Alice in Wonderland didn't exist until it was created by the brain of Lewis Carroll.

Now can you or I put a fence around Westlake Park and charge admission? No. Can I sell you the Brooklyn Bridge, cheap? Now that the Broadway Department Store is at Hollywood and Vine, will it ever be public domain again unless by deed of the owner or purchase by the public?

But Alice in Wonderland, a property certainly more valuable than Hollywood and Vine or Westlake Park, and possibly more valuable than the Brooklyn Bridge, that's another matter. Alice in Wonderland is in public domain. That means that this publisher or that publisher, this studio or that studio can print it, make a film of it, a cartoon or a television play and not a dime goes to the author, his heirs or his assigns. Nor to the public that presumably owns the public domain.

The present copyright law gives the artistic creator protection for only twenty-eight years, and for another twenty-eight years under certain provisions. After that the government washes its hands of you. But dig an oil well, open up a mine, build a factory and it is yours forever and the government stands back of that. Here is an obvious crying injustice.

It has been pointed out that Whistler's etchings date from about the same time as the engravings on Erie stock certificates. No one can now doubt that the etchings of Whistler were the better investment and the Whistler originals today are way beyond the value of Erie's watered stock. But as far as Whistler and his heirs are concerned it would have been far better had the master engraved stock certificates, for Whistler's etchings have fallen into public domain and anyone may make and sell as many copies as he chooses and can pocket all the profit. But just you try to copy that Erie stock!

But now we come to the most important difference between Whistler and Erie. For should Erie ever come into public domain whether by purchase or any other method, then it would be run not for anyone's

profit, but for the good of the public as a whole. It would really become **public** domain. But Whistler's etchings are not run for the general benefit of the public. The kind of public domain into which works of art fall after fifty-six years or less is not really public domain at all, it is a kind of public grab-bag for promoters.

Consider Mr. David O. Selznick "registering" all of Shakespeare's plays. That means that by some sort of homesteading, some sort of squatter's rights, these great classics are now "his." This is "motion picture code." Mr. Selznick will no doubt make excellent movies of them, but we are inclined to believe that the profit will go to someone other than Mr. W. Shakespeare. It is clear that as far as our copyright practices are concerned the human posterior sitting on something has rights under the law that transcend those enjoyed by the creating brain or heart of man.

This anatomical injustice in favor of the gluteal region is of more immediate importance than might seem at first glance. Our Screen Writers' Guild is trying to institute an American Authors' Authority. The angry howls that have arisen from the trade press are evidence enough that the producing companies will fight the A.A.A. But how will they fight?

A few years back ASCAP was engaged in a rather similar battle with the broadcasting companies. ASCAP refused to let their modern compositions be played unless certain conditions were agreed to. The companies fought back with the only weapon at their disposal: music in public domain. Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair, the effort of a fellow composer of another era, was used to bludgeon the modern composer into surrender to the companies' will. The dead were made to fight the living.

The writers can expect similar treatment in their fight for an A.A.A. We shall not have the usual half-dozen classics a year, we shall have a solid procession of Wuthering Heights, Robinson Crusoe, Snow White, Crime and Punishment, and Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea. Not bad. But wherewith shall the living writer clothe himself if the unpaid dead can yield better profits? Of course, the public will soon tire of the classics, but before they are surfeited, we may have to surrender.

What's the answer? Obviously we can't look up the heirs to Shakespeare or to Defoe. But we can demand that the public domain be truly

administered for the public weal. Either the government (through a Secretary of Fine Arts, long overdue in our cabinet), or the various responsible bodies of organized artists, should be put in charge of public domain. Definite fees could then be asked for the use of this material. Musicians, in particular, will, I know, welcome the payment of a royalty for the performance of Brahms and Beethoven. It will give the modern composer a chance to be heard on equal financial terms with his predecessors. But in general the whole field of arts will benefit. Funds will become available that can be used for scholarships and fellowships in the arts. Sick and aged artists can be aided. Publications, concerts, exhibitions can be sponsored. The public domain will then become public in fact.

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THE SWG SHORT-PLAY AWARD

Response to the announcement last month of the SWG Short-Play Award has until now been disappointingly light, Committee Chairman Milton Krims reveals. The number of actual scripts submitted is small, and the committee has not been deluged with the requests for information concerning the contest which it had anticipated.

The following facts are given here as a reminder to SWG members, all of whom are eligible to enter scripts in the competition:

SWG members **only** are eligible to submit short plays;

There is no limitation as to form or content of plays or playlets submitted — they may be dramatic, poetic, musical, satirical, ballet, choral, or what have you; merit and purpose will be the sole determining factors in selection;

It is planned to produce three plays each quarter and at the end of a year to make an award for the best one;

First production is planned for some time in December so, though no absolute deadline has been set, plays aimed at the first program should be submitted no later than the middle of November; if you are working on a script and won't have it ready till later on, a note to the committee telling them when they may expect to receive your entry will be appreciated.

Those are all the rules that exist: except for Guild production, all other production and publication rights will remain yours.

The committee, originally made up of Milton Krims, Paul Green and William Kozlenko, has been augmented to include S. K. Lauren.

They urge you to get your scripts in as rapidly as possible or — failing that — to let them know when they may expect to be hearing from you.

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PROBLEMS OF THE OUTDOOR ACTION WRITER

JACK NATTEFORD &
LUCI WARD

OF ALL motion pictures, the greater number are outdoor melodramas set in the Old West, an outrageously implausible region, a sort of Cloud-Cuckoo Land created by such romantics as Zane Grey, and by such press-agents as Ned Buntline, to form a backdrop for such commercialized heroes thereof as Buffalo Bill, the meat contractor, and Pawnee Bill, the rip-snortin' schoolteacher. Nothing remotely resembling this Old West has existed since Natteford saw the last of the open range as a small boy homesteading in the Panhandle, or since Ward heard reports thereof from her late uncle, the hugest Texas Ranger ever to wear a badge. In fact, nothing like the Old West of printed and filmed fiction ever did exist.

For example, we are conditioned to believe that the pioneers fought their way, battle after battle, across the Great Plains and the Rockies, against the savage hordes of encircling redskins who attacked the wagon trains every night and threw in matinee performances come Sunday. The cold records of the War Department state that of the hundreds of thousands of emigrants to California and Oregon, only 168 were probably "killed by Indians." The red men watched the wagon trains cross their hunting grounds and didn't give a damn until the drivers stopped to settle down — in which case they ceased to be emigrants, protected by the U. S. Army, and became settlers, strictly on their own.

That's the fact. As for the fiction, Ward alone has killed off more

Well-known writers of Westerns, often working as a team, JACK NATTEFORD & LUCI WARD have jointly contributed to *The Screen Writer* before.

emigrants, in more covered wagon battles, than all the Plains and Mountain tribes put together. A sizable part of her work happened to be done for studios whose executives believed the Old West to be best typified by The Covered Wagon, gentlemen who believed in the box-office value of the ignoble red man.

Natteford, dealing with other studios, has exterminated only a paltry few dozen emigrants. But his bad men have been responsible for enough armed violence to make countless thousands mourn. During the gangster cycle, many studio executives agreed with him that the Old West could best be related to the cash register by the exploitation of well-known gangster type outlaws.

The Old West can be all things to all men. To Frederic Remington's Old West of the red man and the cavalry man, to Owen Wister's Old West of the cattle rustler and the cowboy, to Emerson Hough's Old West of the ox-train, to Stewart Edward White's Old West of the Dons and the padres, to Harold Bell Wright's Old West of industrial empire-building, many other Old Wests could be added — including yours, no doubt.

Such vagueness of background and setting would seem to present an opportunity to the outdoor action writer, rather than to pose a problem.

Yet such is not the case, for the simple reason that the outdoor action melodrama, lacking a veritable, factual background and setting, ceases to be true melodrama in the technical sense, and takes on the nature of fantasy.

While it may seem a far distance from James Barrie's Peter Pan to Jules Furthman's The Outlaw, the background for one is as factually nebulous as the backdrop for the other.

The Western is melodrama partially divorced from reality. The close association of the Western film and the fantasy, as forms of dramatic writing, was unconsciously revealed by Maurice Maeterlinck, creator of The Blue Bird, when he came to Hollywood in the early '20's to contribute his esoteric talents to Eminent Authors Productions. After the great Belgian mystic had labored on the payroll for five weeks, the horrified executives of that organization discovered that their expensively imported genius was writing them a Western.

The special problem of fantasy, which the writer in the Western field must shoulder in addition to every other problem of the writer's craft, is the problem of making the audience (and, of course, the producer) believe that which they know to be untrue. The basis of fantasy is believability.

We cannot stress this simple point too strongly. It holds and resolves the principal problems of the Western writer. He learns by experience that only in the cheaper brackets can he rely upon his background being accepted by an act of faith, like the miracle of the loaves and the fishes.

In the top-drawer class of outdoor melodramas, the writer frequently begins with a conscious effort to sell the audience a bill of goods — the background. Frequently his procedure is to establish the known, and then to use it as a bridge into the unknown.

An outstanding example of this technique was the silent film entitled Douglas Fairbanks in *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. The authors, known only through their studio-imposed by-line of Elton Thomas, faded in on documentary views of ruined English castles, and by this evidence they proved the rubbled ruins were once majestic fortresses, and conditioned their audiences to accept the time and place of medieval, mythical England.

In the same vein, it may be noted that Hackett and Goodrich begin their version of *The Virginian* with the arrival of a railroad train and a schoolteacher — items of veritability known even to a child.

Many writers strive for believability by turning in pages that are damp with the perspiration of earnest research. This involves judgment of material; better invent sober fiction than be let down by outrageous fact. It is quite true that Pat Garrett, under fire from two outlaws holed up in an adobe shack, did sever the halter-rope of one of their horses tied nearby, did herd the animal to the only door of the shack with bullets, and did kill that horse so exactly that his fallen carcass jammed the door of the shack and made escape from it impossible. On the evidence of reliable witnesses, that's exactly how Pat Garrett effected the first capture of Billy the Kid — but if put on the screen, would you believe it? Of course not, and so Wanda Tuchock wisely omitted it from her script for Metro's *Billy the Kid*.

In most of the manuals dealing with the pursuit of excellence in the

writing craft, we writers are advised to write of that which we know from personal experience, and only that which we know. We are told to imitate the example of Vicki Baum, who took a chambermaid's job and so gained the realism for her *Grand Hotel*, and of Leslie T. White, who writes murder mysteries out of a background including decades of sterling law-enforcement.

Well, perhaps you can tell us of some way that an outdoor action writer can chuck-ride up the ol' Powder River and git took on to some posse bound to stomp out them thar' rustlers.

All we know of any means for practical experience with our material is that a modern ranch resembles the Old West about as much as a police station resembles King Arthur's court and his knights of the table round. The boys are in the same business of defending the weak against the oppressions of the predatory strong — but you wouldn't gain much source material for a tale of chivalry by checking with a sheriff's substation.

As to the value of any experience to be gained by intimate contact with baby beef and baled alfalfa, we are reminded of a conversation reportedly held between Harold Lipshutz and John Stone, when they discovered that between them they were writing all the Tom Mix features at the old Fox Studio. Neither, it seemed, had ever been on a ranch. Lipshutz suggested that it might be a good idea for them at least to go and take a look at their favorite scene. Stone demurred. He pointed out that none of the other writers on the lot, many of whom had a Western background, were writing **any** of the Mixes.

So, without cluttering up their fantasies with any approach to reality, they kept on writing all the Mixes — in one of which Tom's horse Tony actually leaped the Grand Canyon! Tom's personal audience would believe anything.

Even were it possible to have practical, first-hand experience in the Old West, the touchstone of absolute believability would still evade the outdoor action writer. His Old West would be unique to him, and possibly incredible to his producer (who hadn't been there).

The producer is an astute fellow who has only one item of credulity regarding the outdoor action fable. He believes either that it can be made and sold profitably, or he doesn't. If he is skeptical of the merchandising

value of Indians, we must "include them out." If he doubts the box-office power of covered wagons, they will never get gee-hawed all the way to Oregon. The problem of dealing in a half-fantastic medium is closely related to the problem of getting the check. Our Old West must be the West the producer believes, and thinks the audience will buy.

How a writer solves his problems is up to the individual. The purpose of this article is solely to point out that the outdoor action film, commonly considered to be mere straight melodrama which can be tossed off with easy concept and speedy execution, is really far more difficult, involving as it does the added hazards of writing believable fantasy.



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MINORITY PROBLEMS

The Common Council for American Unity has taken first steps toward the establishment of an Advisory Committee for Radio and Motion Pictures to deal with foreign-language groups in the United States, other minority groups, and foreign countries and their peoples.

Toward this end, the Chief of the Council's Foreign Language Radio Division, Jacques F. Ferrand, has made a trip to Hollywood and established first contacts with a few prominent individuals and organizations interested in participating in the creation of such a committee.

Its aims are outlined as follows: "The proposed Advisory Committee would furnish, on request, information and advice about film and radio scripts, settings, characters and dialogue and other matters dealing with or alluding in any way to nationality or minority groups in the United States or foreign peoples.

"The Committee would also work with motion picture and radio producers and directors, script writers, actors and broadcasters to prevent misrepresentation of any group or people and to encourage films and programs promoting intergroup understanding and American unity and championing the ideals of tolerance and One World."

It is proposed that membership in the Advisory Committee should include:

"1. Prominent film and radio producers, actors, writers and technicians, including many of foreign origin;

"2. Representatives of the foreign language press and radio, and of the different nationality groups;

"3. Educators, sociologists and others familiar with different nationality, racial and religious groups and the problems of intergroup relations."

It is expected that an announcement will soon be forthcoming concerning the basic composition of this Committee (the principle of which has received approval from the Producers' Association and various labor groups within the industry), its Hollywood headquarters, and its immediate plans.

In the meantime, those having problems coming within the purview of the Committee, or otherwise interested in cooperating with it, are urged to get in touch with Jacques F. Ferrand, Common Council for American Unity, 20 West 40th St., New York 18, N. Y.



RE: " . . . COMING OF AGE . . . "

LESTER COLE

WHEN I read Mary McCall, Jr.'s article, *The Unlick'd Bear Whelp*, in the August issue of *The Screen Writer*, my first reaction was one of uneasiness; a second reading did not dispel the sensation. My reason might cause some people to consider me neurotic; you know, the type who starts looking under his bed each night before retiring to make sure no company union or open shop is hiding there.

After many years of association in the Screen Writers' Guild with Miss McCall, I am positive her one and only aim is an ever stronger and more unified Guild, yet to me the ideas expressed in her article — however well-intentioned — would, if practiced, have a retrogressive effect.

It would be difficult to find many writers unsympathetic with Miss McCall's longing for "Good New Days." As I understand her use of the phrase, relating it as she does to greater control over our material, it means taking the lid off, or lifting the ceiling. That's fine in itself, I'm sure. But if you advocate removing the ceiling so that we can straighten our heads and get the cricks out of our necks, and at the same time announce your intention to cut the floor out from under our feet, the result, if achieved, can be only a sort of metaphysical suspension, or a painfully hard earthly fall — Guild style.

I'm referring to her comments on the issue of a guaranteed annual minimum wage, on which a resolution was offered by our Veterans' Committee, and accepted for study by the membership. Miss McCall states: "As a Board member, as a Guild member, I intend to fight against this guaranteed annual income as a goal, a desideratum for us." With equal frankness I want to say that as a Board member and a Guild member I intend to fight FOR a guaranteed minimum annual wage. And I'm

LESTER COLE, long a writer of distinguished screenplays, is First Vice President of the Screen Writers' Guild and one of the organizers of the reconstituted Guild in 1933.

in favor of it for the same reason Miss McCall is against it. I, too, long for the coming of "Good New Days."

Please note: the words "minimum annual wage," which I use, are those embodied in the official resolution, and not "annual income," as Miss McCall puts it. Annual income can be construed as anything from a dole to coupons clipped from stock certificates; minimum annual wage can mean one thing and one thing only — the very least a writer can be paid for services rendered.

Miss McCall says, "... we will come of age as screen writers when we turn our backs on economic security and our faces to our medium." If Miss McCall had been with us in 1933 when we re-organized the Guild, she would have heard the same idea expressed by that handful of writers loyal to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences who opposed the formation of the Guild. The issue then was vaguely economic; the producers had arbitrarily imposed upon the writers a fifty percent cut in salary. And all of those present — whether their salary was \$35 per week or \$3500 — joined the new organization with one idea dominating all others — to organize a defense against all assaults upon our economic security. In facing the problem of economic security no one was turning his or her back on the medium. Our backs were where they should have been — up.

From that time until this, safeguarding the economic security of the writer has been the primary function of the Screen Writers' Guild. I believe we should fight to maintain that principle for a long time to come.

The fight for economic rights and that for integrity as writers cannot be viewed as alternative, inimical goals. To me they seem flesh and sinew of the same body. In these days the only people I know who can turn their backs on security are those who have so much security so safely put away they can afford the luxury of philosophizing on the beneficial or harmful effects upon the individual so situated.

A portrait of the writer of talking motion pictures in 1946 bears little resemblance to the 19th Century daguerreotype depicting the happily starving artist in his cold Parisian garret.

I would like to believe that most of us, squarely faced with the question, would readily admit that our ability to "face our medium" will

weigh out in direct proportion to the size of our bank accounts. Franklin Roosevelt said it well when he stated there would never be complete democracy without economic democracy. And if democracy includes freedom of thought, as I believe it does, then we will never have that freedom to express ourselves in our medium without the essential ingredient of economic security.

When circumstances force writers to accept whatever assignments they can get, they do so with one thought in mind: do the best job you can, get the highest pay you can for it, and try to put aside money toward a day when you can afford the time to write what you prefer to write.

Another of the reasons which Miss McCall advances to support her avowed intention to fight against the annual minimum wage is that it would mean "... economic security of a sort, economic security which no other writing men and women enjoy, except the salaried staffs of magazines, so oddly narrow in scope or highly technical in subject matter that no free lance writer can supply their peculiar need."

It strikes me this is a most potent argument FOR the annual minimum wage in motion picture writing, rather than one against it. If ever an area was "narrow in scope" AND highly technical, it is in that field of screen writing where the annual minimum wage would most often apply.

Relative limitations, whether they be of form, time, content or space are placed upon all writers in all fields, as well as restrictions which limit freedom in far subtler and more vicious ways. However, within these limitations there are fields of writing where the world is just about the author's oyster. In the great percentage of pictures produced, the oyster is just about the author's world.

Last year more than half of Hollywood's total production fell into the classification of low-budget Westerns, Murder Mysteries and Melodramas. Aside from the writer's freedom to choose as his locale Montana, California or Texas (it will be photographed at Calabasas, anyway), the scope is so narrow in terms of story telling and character development, and so limited by budget requirements, that the very highest degree of technical skill is demanded of the author. Not only specialized skill, but speed! I don't know whether anyone claims these films to be art, but I do know writers constantly are trying to make them better. And there's

something else I'm sure of, because I've written them; they're WORK! At least as much brain-sweat goes into them as into the writing of other pictures. That's what counts from a Guild point of view.

Years ago the issue before the Guild was: "Shall we make a determined fight to establish a minimum wage?" Today Miss McCall is offering the same arguments against the annual minimum as were then put forth against any minimum.

And yet it should be apparent that the simple minimum wage and the annual minimum wage are actually one and the same thing. The same thing, only more of it.

Those writers who were here at that time will recall that it was pointed out to the opponents of any minimum wage that a minimum already existed, whether they liked it or not. The point was that the existing minimum was not decided upon by us, but by the producers. That minimum was the \$25 or \$35 per week being received as salary by some of our members. We decided that if a minimum had to exist, as indeed it did, we'd be the ones to decide the amount. And we did. First by raising it to \$75 per week, then \$125 and, a few weeks ago, to \$187.50.

The identical situation exists today. We have an annual minimum wage, whether we like it or not, also imposed upon us by the producers. Today's guaranteed annual minimum wage is \$375. That sum represents our new guaranteed minimum weekly wage of \$187.50 for the present guaranteed minimum period of employment — two weeks. (Naturally, that's for a qualified screenwriter, since the writer must qualify in the first place to receive the weekly minimum.) We also have the following minimum conditions: a two week period of guaranteed employment for those whose salary is under \$250, one week for those under \$500, and one day for those over \$500.

With these conditions in existence, the real and only questions before us, as I see it, are these: Is the membership satisfied with \$375 as an annual minimum wage? Or do we want to raise it to \$380? Or \$2580? Are we satisfied with two week, one week, and one day minimum periods of employment? Or do we want to extend these to ten weeks, eight weeks and six weeks — or more, or less — in the respective categories? Or do we want to eliminate salary categories in relation to

periods of employment and seek a uniform minimum period for all writers? These, I believe are questions which need our consideration. Let's not get sidetracked into a discussion as to whether we want something that's always been with us and will undoubtedly remain with us for some time to come.

We cannot separate the question of the annual minimum wage, in my opinion, from any of the Guild's problems, particularly from the fight to achieve the American Authors' Authority. At any rate, not as long as we want to have just one Screen Writers' Guild, not two, or more — or none. To maintain the Guild, and increase its strength, the problems of each writer must remain the problems of all, and those of all the problems of each. To keep the present structure, and to build high and fearlessly upon it, I believe we cannot forget that economic security is our keystone. Otherwise it will become increasingly difficult to hold fast to our integrity, both collectively as a Guild and individually as self-respecting men and women.

Today at least ninety-nine percent of our pictures are encircled, bounded on the North by Censorship, on the East by Monopoly, on the South by Rankin and Bilbo and on the West by Santa Monica. Our critics, accurately or not, have described us as living in a plush-lined intellectual concentration camp, held in by the above-mentioned as well as other strands of barbed wire.

To whatever extent that may be true, I know we'll break out. I'm sure of it. We'll do it with a strong, unified Guild, with a determined membership which knows it has a decent stake, materially as well as spiritually, in this new medium of creative expression which is also an industry: a membership which will not only VOTE for an American Authors' Authority, but will have the moral stamina growing out of economic justice to withstand all the pressures and all the tempting financial offers that are certain to come if and when the going gets rough. I believe there's only one way to do the job: all together.

But I'm afraid of our chances if we permit ourselves to rely upon a select group, however gifted, who think they can cut a path for us through the barbed wire with pearl-handled snippers.

(ED. NOTE: For further illustration of Mr. Cole's thesis as it applies to writers in the minimum wage brackets, see charts published on pp. 47-48 of this issue.)

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OPINION AND THE MOTION PICTURE

RICHARD G. HUBLER

THE cyclical recurrence of the debate between the creative and critical talents of the theatre and motion pictures has been due in large part simply to a change of attitude on the part of the reading public. Originally, the opinion of a stage or motion picture critic was that and nothing more: one man's notes upon a production. It included data both de- and constructive, together with a precis of the plot and comments upon the abilities of the artists involved.

This commentary was often fortified by the fact that the critic had seen a good many similar productions and, therefore, was able to draw upon a poke of comparisons. Like any other pundit, reference to the past produced respect in the audience. This kind of appeal to ancestor worship generated narcissism in the critic and a curious response from the readers. To wit, an authority beyond the personal standards of the person involved.

It is a fact that as soon as opinion takes larger latitude than personal reactions plus, it may be, a fairly comprehensive knowledge of the field — then it tends to think itself fact rather than fiction. This is always a nebulous line: straight reporting has enough to do to keep the facts in line. Opinion in the field of entertainment has little to do with facts beyond a recital of the contents of the theatre program.

This may be startling to those who believe in absolutes of "good" and "bad," but it remains true that such standards demand enormous universality of taste. Even such a seemingly undebatable matter as a good or bad egg is relatively debatable when the attitude of the Chinese is considered.

All that the good reviewer can say, in essence, is this: "I think, in

RICHARD G. HUBLER, novelist and magazine writer as well as screen writer, contributed an amusing piece on *The Hughes Method*, to *The Screen Writer* for June.

view of my prejudices, education, sensibilities, and experience, that the production, under the varying circumstances I have seen it, in the mental, physical and psychical state which at that time favored me, is in its present condition a good (or bad) presentation." Even this, in order to be even slightly fair, would have to be broken down into sets, makeup, acting, direction, production, writing, lighting, audience and theatre handicaps, and the like.

This makes critical reviewing a notably hazardous occupation. Who can say when the healthy color of a fresh mind fades into the sere and yellow jaundice of a man who has seen too many too long upon the stage or screen? Who can say what predilections produce a genuinely good critic or a farceur?

The point is that, so long as the public regarded the critic as a man of pure opinion, usually appointed on an arbitrary basis to a steady job, the critic kept his place. As soon, however, as they looked upon him as an oracle — as they do today, — the usefulness of his position degenerated in exact ratio to his pontifical elevation.

The unreined critic of course responds to his public. He leans undoubtedly to cavilling reviews because it is easier to be clever in a cavil than in acclamation. He abandons constructive criticism because no one, outside the theatre itself, cares about it — and often the theatre doesn't care about it. He takes upon his mind more and more the functions of a sports reporter — telling what and how things happened and adding his own often unwarranted conclusion which is, beyond his own empyrean, pure speculation.

Nevertheless, despite the public leaning on the critic — all the more evident in spite of the fact that Broadway shows often succeed in disregard of the carp or praise, — there is an enormously important function which such an individual must fill.

The creative mind is rarely critical. It guards its work with the jealous fierceness of a mother tiger. It often loses the forest for the trees and an incredible number of trees are missing from the drama because of the forest. If there is to be a steady, though snarling, advance in the field of entertainment, it will be due in a large measure to the convictions of a class of critics whose abilities are devoted primarily to a study of the betterment of the medium they criticize.

This is particularly true of the motion picture. The criticisms of present screen products range all the way from the purely vicious and consciously clever reviews of *The New Yorker* to the grovelling concoctions dictated to local newspaper critics by the studio press agents. But the fault of this gamut is not in its nadir or zenith. It lies in the fact that there is no middle ground.

There is no knowledgeable, constructive (and destructive, as the case arises) motion picture criticism in the field today. Variety reviews only for potential box-office; *The Hollywood Reporter* is pitiful in its blather. From *The New York Times* to *The Burlap Center Rag*, the critics are chewing their own bones of propaganda or prejudice and have neither the training nor the standards properly to appraise the output of Hollywood.

Whether it is lucky or unlucky — possibly because most of the 100,000,000 people who go to movies every year either can't read or don't, — the critics have a relatively slight effect upon the screen, beyond raising the blood pressure of Hollywood executives. There is no symptom of an influence comparable to that which the critics of the New York stage now wield.

By this same token, however, there is no voice of authority which is fearless enough to call the motion pictures what they are — the greatest medium of art ever invented. The custom is, especially in Hollywood, to decry the movies as the sinecure of art. There is no voice of talent and conviction willing to devote time and effort to precise, pin-point criticism.

As a result, Hollywood has no mirror. The public is hypnotized, so that the boxoffice is useless as a standard. The critics are either scornful or subjugated. The creative talents run off in all directions, without discipline or, indeed, meaning, beyond the cash register.

This is a ruinous state of affairs for any art. It would not be for an artist like James Joyce or any other cryptographer. But in motion pictures, where the appeal must and should be directed toward the largest possible audience, with the objectives of entertainment, education, and realization — this is ultimate cinemicide.

Most producers would be glad of an honest, uninfluenced (either by ulcers or press agents) opinion upon their films. The studios, by and

large, would welcome it, once the overpass of ego was cleared. And it would benefit hugely every other department of the motion picture, as well as, let us hope, making intelligible the honest desires of the talent which now labors in the cave of Hollywood without light or respite.

The emphasis of such criticism would be marshalled at whatever point the film was weakest: in writing, direction, acting, or even in original concept. It would aim at constructivism, but it would not spare the lash of derision. It would not flatter the conceit of the critic nor that of the subject.

Its function, in essence, would be to keep what Borodin used to call "the long view" of motion pictures as a great art which has a pre-eminent place in the world-to-be. Pictures would be framed in the category not of their immediate predecessors but in the light of all the great pictures which have been made in the forty-year history of motion pictures.

It is possible that this is impossible. That time, energy, or the will is lacking in the people who might be able to write or sponsor such criticism. If this is true, it is too bad. For then the motion picture, in Hollywood at least, becomes the image of its own best friend and worst enemy: the insatiable public that seeks only release from reality and gratification of its fundamental instincts in the motion picture.

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SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD STUDIO CHAIRMEN

COLUMBIA — Melvin Levy; Ted Thomas, alternate.

M-G-M — Isobel Lennart; Sonya Levien, Osso Van Eyss, Polly James, William Ludwig, Robert Andrews, stewards; Paul Wellman, Arch Whitehouse, alternates.

PARAMOUNT — Abe Polonsky; Francis E. Faragoh, alternate.

R-K-O — Arthur Ross; Bess Taffel, alternate.

REPUBLIC — John Butler; Betty Burbridge, alternate.

20th CENTURY-FOX — Val Davies; Wanda Tuchock, alternate.

WARNER BROS. — Randal MacDougall.



SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD, INC.

1655 NO. CHEROKEE AVE., HOLLYWOOD 28, CALIFORNIA
AFFILIATED WITH AUTHORS' LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.

E D I T O R I A L

AS REPORTED in the AAA Bulletin in our last issue, the Guild committee to further plans for an American Authors' Authority has been set up and has already held its first meetings. Since, in the last analysis, the AAA will be a function of the entire Authors' League, care has been exercised to include on the committee screen writers who are also active in other guilds of the League.

In the interests of efficiency, the full committee has been divided into three smaller groups: a sub-committee which, working with counsel, will actually draft a tentative plan; a sub-committee which will maintain contact and exchange ideas with the other guilds of the League; a sub-committee for public relations.

By invitation of Elmer Rice, President of the Authors' League, William Pomerance, executive secretary of the Guild, attended a meeting of the League Council on September 18th, report on which will be found elsewhere in this issue.

As we go to press, the local journalistic front seems relatively quiet. Material from The Hollywood Reporter, however, has been copiously and enthusiastically reprinted in The New York Daily News, The New

York Enquirer, and other journals of a like character. Your Executive Board feels that no comment is necessary.

A measure of publicity rarely accorded the activities of more representative groups of writers heralded the birth of the American Writers' Association, formed to oppose AAA on the familiar grounds of "monopoly" and "Communist domination." These charges are so clearly refuted by the plan itself that we may confidently count on winning over those AWA adherents who have been exposed to the hysteria but not to the facts, leaving a solid but exposed core of Hearst puppets, professional obstructionists and diehard "individualists."

The rumor mills in studio private dining-rooms still grind fast and exceedingly large. For the moment, the thesis that the writers want to tell the producers what shall go on the screen seems to have given partial place to a new and equally quaint hypothesis, viz., that the facilities of the Authority will be barred to all but members of the Authors' League, and that "young writers" will therefore be shut out of the story market.

During our long years of bargaining with the producers, we have often run across this curious solicitude for the "young writer." Before we allow ourselves to be drowned in crocodile tears, let us make our proposal doubly clear:

(1) The AAA, like the Guild and the League, is open to ALL writers, large and small, conservative and liberal, old and young;

(2) The AAA plan is of greater benefit to the "young writer" than to the established writer, the latter usually being in a far better position to negotiate for his own advantage as to salary and working conditions and the protection of his rights;

(3) The facilities of the AAA will be open to all new writers, whether or not they are members of a Guild of the Authors' League.

Although at present the exact distinction between membership and participation in the AAA has not been wholly worked out, it is contemplated that a Board of Directors, consisting of delegates certified by each of the writing guilds, will govern the AAA. In this way members of the guilds will be given a voice in directing the policy and affairs of the Authority. In any event, the Authority will be completely democratic in conception, purpose and administration. And under no circumstances

will the AAA or the League which fathers it ever shut the door on that constant influx of new talent which is the lifeblood of all literature and entertainment.

Your Executive Board will continue to keep you informed on the more sprightly and imaginative of the current rumors in forthcoming issues of this magazine.



AT A meeting of the membership of the SWG it was agreed to ask for a raise in the minimum wage to \$300 a week. In view of this, many members are curious as to how the Conciliation Committee finally arrived at the sum of \$187.50, announced last month.

This misunderstanding comes from ignorance as to the nature of a Conciliation Committee. Unlike a Bargaining Committee, a Conciliation Committee is not supposed to confer with its principals. In this particular case the Producers appointed three members, and the Guild three members. The job of these six people was to arrive among themselves at a reasonable raise in the minimum. If unable to agree, the matter would be thrown to an Arbitration Committee consisting of one member appointed by the Guild, one member appointed by the Producers, and these two members would agree upon a third.

The \$187.50 figure was reached by taking the former minimum (\$125) and adding to it the percentage raises granted by the Producers to other unions during the period of the SWG agreement to date, plus a certain percentage for the future period of two-and-a-half years during which time, under our contract, no further revisions of the minimum are to take place.

It became increasingly clear to your Conciliation Committee that our original minimum had been too low and that it was almost impossible to rectify this either in conciliation or in the probable award of an Arbitration Committee. The Conciliation Committee, therefore, felt that the increase to \$187.50 for freelance writers, \$1500 for Western flat deals, and \$2250 for feature flat deals, was as good an award as the Guild could expect. In relation to this we might remember that just as

our first minimum raised wages all along the line, we can expect to see an upward trend in wages for almost all brackets, resulting from this new minimum. The new minimum raises the standard for screen writing and aids us in maintaining the dignity of the profession. But it is not intended that this increase should end the struggle of the Guild for further economic gains. For this reason the Guild is very anxious to secure information from writers in all brackets as to the effect the minimum has had on them, and also we would like to hear what economic problems, grievances, and suggestions for improvement of their economic status the members of the Guild have.

Such information will be extremely valuable to the Guild in its future bargaining. It will help us achieve the higher minimum our membership feels reasonable and necessary.

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S . W . G . B U L L E T I N

THE HOLLYWOOD LABOR DISPUTE

The current lockout and strike in the major Hollywood studios began too late to permit inclusion in this issue of any analysis, summary or report of the events. However, in order that the position of the SWG may be clear to all those concerned, the pages of The Screen Writer were reopened before press time to permit insertion of the following resolutions, passed at the Emergency Membership Meeting of the Guild, Oct. 1, 1946:

Resolution No. 1

WHEREAS, an investigation of the physical facts arising from the current strike, at and near the studios of the major motion picture producers; shows among other things:

1. firearms have been used in the vicinity of at least one of the studios;
2. numerous persons have been injured so as to require hospital treatment;
3. automobiles have been disabled, car windows smashed;
4. an automobile, driven deliberately over a person, was used as a weapon at the scene of the strike;
5. even persons not participants in the controversy have been roughed up;

6. ammunition, tear gas, other deadly weapons, and similar armaments have been brought into one or more of the studios;

7. some of the studios have recognized the likelihood of serious violence by bringing in cots, and making other arrangements for housing workers within studios;

8. the Sheriff of Los Angeles County has declared a state of emergency;

9. the Screen Writers' Guild believes that a situation dangerous to its individual members may arise at any studio at any time;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: The Screen Writers' Guild recognizes and

reaffirms its obligation under its minimum basic agreement with the Producers, but also recognizes the paramount right of each member to personal security and to be free from danger, from threat of physical injury and from personal indignities;

In any case, in which the facts warrant such action, the Guild will use every possible means to protect the employment of any member, who in good faith and in reasonable fear of personal indignity or of injury to life and limb refuses to enter the studio of his employer but continues to work conscientiously at home;

AND FURTHER, the Guild at its own expense will bring legal action on behalf of any writer who to the satisfaction of the Executive Board establishes the fact that he has been the victim of discrimination by any producer as a result of such decision to work at home during the present labor dispute in the motion picture industry.

Resolution No. 2

WHEREAS the Screen Writers' Guild feels that there can be no peace in the motion picture industry unless employers and employees alike uphold the force and dignity of arbitration and abide by all decisions rendered by arbitrators,

AND WHEREAS any departure and evasion from such a position is not only a breach of faith but inevitably discourages the use of peaceful methods to settle controversies as they may arise in the future,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

That the Screen Writers' Guild approves of the solution of jurisdictional controversies by arbitration finally and conclusively binding all the parties, and

The Screen Writers' Guild urges the Screen Actors' Guild, at its meeting on October 2nd, to join with the Screen Writers' Guild in asking the Screen Directors' Guild to work with them in using every resource to achieve a speedy and just termination of the present controversy and the establishment of permanent peace in the motion picture industry.

AUTHORS' LEAGUE & AAA

As announced, the Council of the Authors' League met in New York on Sept. 18, to consider the American Authors' Authority. The meeting took place in the midst of the first shots fired by the newly-organized American Writers' Association (referred to in James M. Cain's article heading this issue). Mr. Cain was detained in Hollywood and could not attend the New York meeting as he had planned. In his place, SWG Executive Secretary Wm. Pomerance flew to New York, and immediately following the meeting he telephoned a report to the Guild on which was based the following press release, given to the local papers on Sept. 18:

SWG Press Release

According to word received from New York today the Council of the Authors' League of America, at its meeting (Wednesday, Sept. 18th), voted unanimously to push ahead with research on the program for an American Authors' Authority proposed by the Screen Writers' Guild, and appointed a committee composed of the presidents of the four guilds of the League to coordinate further study of the plan with work now being undertaken by a Screen Writers' Guild committee on the West Coast.

Elmer Rice, president of the Authors' League, presided at the Executive Council meeting at which William Pomerance, executive secretary of the Screen Writers' Guild, presented details of the latest developments in organization and drafting of by-laws on the West Coast. Following a three-hour debate during which the matter was gone into thoroughly, with special emphasis on the key point of how the trusteeship of copyrights to be held by AAA is to be worked out, Rice appointed the Authors' League Committee to work on ways and means of bringing the plan to fruition at the earliest possible moment. This committee will function in New York and will be composed of Presidents Elmer Rice, Richard Rodgers, and Christopher LaFarge, respectively of the Authors' League, Dramatists' and Authors' Guilds, with Peter Lyon, vice-presi-

dent for the Eastern Region of the Radio Writers' Guild, representing National President Sam Moore, and a representative of Emmet Lavery, President of the Screen Writers' Guild, probably to be Marc Connelly. The organizational committee now functioning in Hollywood, composed of Screen Writers' Guild members, including a majority who are also members of other Guilds of the League and are acting as observers for those Guilds, will continue its spadework of setting details for next organizational steps.

It was pointed out by the Screen Writers' Guild that this unanimous vote of confidence was the best answer to the recent attacks on James M. Cain and other Guild members by Rupert Hughes and other writers in the East who have organized the American Writers' Association in an effort to block the progress of the proposed Authority.

League Council Resolution

The exact text of the resolution passed by the Council of the Authors' League on Sept. 18, on which the above press release was based, is:

"Moved, seconded, and carried unanimously that the President appoint a Committee to study the American Authors' Authority plan and any other ways and means of reaching the desired objectives of the leasing of literary property, instead of its outright sale, and the separation of rights; the Committee shall confer with the Screen Writers' Guild Committee and shall investigate, report, and make recommendations to this Council."

The Eastern committee, constituted as outlined in the press release, was to hold its first meeting at a luncheon on Sept. 24.

Meantime, at the request of a national magazine, the Public Relations Committee of AAA, functioning within the Screen Writers' Guild, drew up a statement of overall situation concerning AAA. Here is the text of that statement:

Summary To Date

For a long time, the Screen Writers' Guild has been attempting to evolve some feasible method for rights in literary

works to revert back to the author after use.

This is neither a new nor a revolutionary idea. It has long been the practice in the field of magazine fiction; certainly it seems called for in the motion picture field where very often a literary property, purchased for a small amount, is made and re-made, each time clinking millions of dollars in the studio till without reimbursement to the writer for the repeated use of his work.

The "Reversion of Rights" plan finally attained full flower with a proposal by James M. Cain for an American Authors' Authority. The Authority proposed to copyright material in the author's name and **license**, but never sell, his literary creations.

Thus, actual ownership of his property would always remain with the author, although purchasers would be given ample time to capitalize on their license.

The American Authors' Authority itself would be simply a repository of copyrights voluntarily assigned to it in trust. Its activities would be: (1) To keep accurate record of copyrights and all transactions arising under it; (2) As legal owner of the copyright, to take over all court actions it may become involved in; and (3) As legal owner of the copyright, to enforce vigorously these rights at all times, even in legislation, and especially tax legislation.

It was realized early by the Screen Writers' Guild that if this plan were to have any chance of succeeding, it would have to have the support of every writer and writing group in the country. The plan was therefore taken up with the Authors' League of America, the Authors' Guild, the Dramatists' Guild and the Radio Writers' Guild.

Naturally, a battle was anticipated from the motion picture producers and, naturally, it was not long in coming. All the heavy artillery in the book was dragged out, including the usual and potent red herring.

Plan was called a "Communist Plot," a "blow at individual freedom," and, in The Hollywood Reporter, "a vote for Joe

Stalin." Individual members of the Screen Writers' Guild were violently attacked for leftist leanings, without mention of the rest of the guild which is distinctly conservative.

Most of the plan's attackers seem to have no idea of what it is all about, referring to it as a plot to curtail the individual freedom of the writer and to gag his writing. Actually, at the same session in which it was adopted by the Screen Writers' Guild, a resolution was passed unanimously which stated that, at no time, would there be "any discrimination against material by reason of its content."

Both the Screen Writers' Guild and the Radio Writers' Guild have already overwhelmingly approved the plan in concept. The Authors' League of America, at a session last week, appointed a committee to study the AAA and "any other ways and means of reaching the desired objectives of the leasing of literary property instead of its outright sale."

PHILIP DUNNE RESIGNATION

Due to the press of other SWG work, particularly in connection with the AAA, Philip Dunne, who joined the editorial

committee of The Screen Writer with its fourth issue, in Sept., 1945, has found it necessary to resign his editorial duties. Dunne has a lengthy article elsewhere in this issue and will continue, we hope, to be a frequent contributor.

RELATIONS WITH FRANCE

Following the exchange of letters between Eric Johnston and Emmet Lavery, printed in our last issue, and other SWG steps in defense of the French film industry against a French-American Film Agreement which the membership felt had been unjustly imposed upon a former ally — actions which have been fully covered in these pages since the publication in our July issue of the original appeal from the President of the French Screenwriters' Union, — André Luguet, President of the National Union of French Actors, has sent the following cablegram to Guild President Lavery: "FRENCH NATIONAL UNION OF ACTORS, INFINITELY TOUCHED BY YOUR FRIENDLY ATTITUDE AND POSITION YOU HAVE TAKEN IN BEHALF OF THE FRENCH CINEMA, THANKS YOU WARMLY. (Signed) A. LUGUET, PRESIDENT."

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A . A . A . P R E S S S U R V E Y

The quotations printed below are the first in the series of running excerpts from comment on the American Authors' Authority which it is planned to carry as a regular feature in The Screen Writer each month.

Starting with the first comments following the publication of the plan in the magazine for July, and its endorsement by the SWG membership immediately thereafter, these selections, made by the A. A. A. Public Relations Committee, present at this time solely adverse comment which appeared during the first month. It is felt that readers will find all criticisms voiced herein adequately answered in other parts of this issue:

L. A. Herald-Express, July 27, 1946:

The plan . . . would regiment playwrights, scenarists, radio writers, novelists and magazine authors under the absolute dictatorship of a "full-time salaried tough mugg" leading the A.A.A.

L. A. Examiner, July 27, 1946:

LITERARY CZAR
PROPOSED BY
FILM WRITERS

Left-wingers in Group Backing
'Petrillo of Literature'

Promoted by a group containing many Hollywood left-wingers, a plan was pre-

sented yesterday to create a "Petrillo of literature."

The plan would regiment playwrights, scenarists, radio writers, novelists and magazine authors under the absolute dictatorship of a "literary commissar."

**Valley Times, No. Hollywood,
July 27, 1946:**

**'IRON CURTAIN' BAN
ON WRITERS SOUGHT**

Hollywood writers today are pondering the possibilities of a little movie Kremlin, complete with dictator, and even an "iron curtain" to bar creative talent from outside sources.

**Rochester, N.Y., Times-Union,
July 27, 1946:**

**FILM WRITERS
PLAN CORRAL
FOR AUTHORS**

L. A. Examiner, July 28, 1946:

**AUTHOR'S CZAR
MAY HIT STAGE**

Shuberts to Close Theatres
If Cain Plan is Realized

Aroused by Novelist James Cain's proposal to create a totalitarian commissar of literature, factions within the Screen Writers' Guild yesterday were marshalling forces to combat the plan. . . .

. . . A representative of the Shubert theatrical interests announced
"The plan would deprive producers and publishers, who gamble huge sums financing these writings, from a share in subsequent production or publication. Our organization, under the Cain plan, could not continue to produce for the coming or any other season."

L. A. Herald-Express, July 30, 1946:

**WRITER
CZAR
BATTLE**

Charge Film Guild
Has Fallen Into
Communist Hands

Spirited opposition to Novelist James Cain's plan to set up a literary czar with

power comparable to that wielded by Petrillo in the musician's ranks was forecast today following a 430-to-8 vote in support of the project by the Screen Writers' Guild.

. . . . Screen Writer Fred Niblo, jr., declared: "In the main I believe that the Cain proposal is an insidious plan to control the contents of creative writing, to bring to the screen those messages of foreign enemies who would destroy our nation and to keep from reaching publication or production anything antagonistic to Russia."

L. A. Examiner, Tuesday, July 30, 1946:

**FILM WRITERS
VOTE FOR CZAR**

Stockton, Cal., Record, July 31, 1946:

NOW FOR A WRITERS' CZAR

. . . Screen Writers' Guild assurance that no attempt would be made to censor material or dictate opinion cannot make the proposed scheme more acceptable. It would be a deplorable state of affairs if every author in these United States had to submit to the Hollywood satrapy or have his work treated as "hot cargo."

We fail to see how this authority with its "full-time salaried tough mug" or czar could do anything for the writing arts or the public. But because of the woefully low estate into which Hollywood's outgivings have fallen, it is understandable that writers in the film capital might seek some drastic form of self-protection.

**Hedda Hopper — L. A. Times,
July 31, 1946:**

INKED IN RED

The new writers' deal . . . sounds as though it had been conceived on Joe Stalin's own desk.

Chicago Daily News, Aug. 1, 1946:

BOOK BABBITTS

. . . The proposed authority would act like those sales corporations that handle the products of many manufacturing concerns.

..... The history of the arts suggests that it wouldn't be long before the "out-laws" would be producing all the stuff that people were willing to buy in order to read.

The idea of organizing, standardizing and censoring writing is very old. It has produced several "classic" schools of literature, all of which went to seed or were supplanted by rebel artists.

**Guy Fowler — The Valley Times,
No. Hollywood, Aug. 2, 1946:**

..... The idea is to enthrone a sort of literary Petrillo who would rule the output of words. It seems to me that writing is something you feel, something that even Petrillo couldn't manage. A writer who can be controlled isn't a writer. The time may come when all writers will have to join up or be blacklisted by some organization.

**R.E.G.H. — L. A. Daily News,
Aug. 6, 1946:**

THE SCHEMES WE HATCH

... Reading Cain's panegyric setting forth the struggles of the poor author in the eternal drama of good versus evil is rather like mixing Thucydides' funeral oration with the Declaration of Independence freely paraphrased by Westbrook Pegler.

... The Screen Writers' Guild has voted overwhelmingly for the American Authors Authority ... which will "compel every writer in the country hoping for picture or magazine sale to send his work to the Authority for copyright."

... Is the only American hope ... the stark necessity of building power grids throughout all levels of our society?

**Florida Times-Union, Jacksonville,
Aug. 7, 1946:**

WOULD AUTHORS' COMBINE INJURE "FREE SPEECH"?

... If the new organization intends to outlaw some contributors, to prevent the expression of independent thinkers in print, much harm will be done to the Democratic World.

..... If the struggling independent is eliminated as a competitor for published expression then a sad blow will have struck at one of our most basic freedoms.

Chicago Tribune, Aug. 9, 1946:
REGIMENTED WRITERS

..... The obviously intended purpose of the Authority is to put all writers at the mercy of a clique of insiders who would exercise a censorship at the source upon thought. It would not even need to acknowledge that it was hostile to certain writings. It could silence the author by failing to make any effort to market his work.

This purpose behind the organization ... may be disguised, but the authority patently is designed to establish an ideological regimentation in the United States.

... This scheme has the appearance of being communist inspired. It is certainly totalitarian. If it is permitted to succeed among writers ... the newspapers of America will be next and editorial content will follow the party line as Mr. Cain and his colleagues dictate it.

**John O'Connor — The Catholic News,
Aug. 10, 1946:**

... The chains for the American people are being forged in Hollywood. They are not the chains of legislation nor of economics. The chains I refer to are the chains of controlled ideas.

... The American Authors Authority will give ONE man ... the totalitarian power to control ALL copyrights.

... The implications throw the shadow of the Kremlin and the ghost of Goebbels across the typewriters and manuscripts of America.

**Editorial — The Catholic News,
Aug. 10, 1946:**

... This is an idea with its roots in the philosophy of dictatorship. Its most ardent supporters are reds, fellow-travelers and their dupes. It is the most brazen device yet conceived for the control of the channels of communication in this country and for the furthering of the

immediate Soviet objective in this nation, the regimentation of American opinion as dictated by the Kremlin.

N. Y. Enquirer, Aug. 12, 1946:

... The Screen Writers' Guild attempt to set up a committee to control all literary copyrights is something to give alarm to any struggling or successful author who objects to totalitarian procedure.

William H. Mooring — Tidings, L. A., Aug. 16, 1946:

... Firstly, it will build an impenetrable phalanx of established movie writers around the honeypots of Hollywood success; secondly, it will fall under the executive and administrative influence of leftist writers who will make the AAA a veritable winnowing machine to blow away every screen idea that does not conform to Communistic specifications; and thirdly, it will develop emphasis upon financial gains to be wrested from Hollywood movie producers by a few writers able to force their way into the monopoly.

William Mylander — Des Moines Register, Aug. 18, 1946:

Congress, when it reconvenes in January, will face new and serious labor issues — this time in the field of public information ...

In Hollywood, California, the Screen Writers' Guild has voted a plan for the American Authors' Authority which would constitute a virtual closed shop monopoly in the magazine, theatre, radio and movie field.

... What really alarms members of Congress who have learned of the plan,

however, is the control that would be given the "authority" to determine which writers could sell to which medium of expression, or even the type of material they could write ...

... The Case bill, which President Truman vetoed, contained provisions against so-called secondary labor boycotts.

Roscoe Drummond — Christian Science Monitor, Aug. 21, 1946:

... a writers' closed-shop union which ultimately could have the power of economic life and death over every magazine and book publisher in the country, which could determine what articles could be printed in what magazines, what books could be published, what movies could be produced, what radio scripts could go on the air. ...

... That the projected American Authors' Authority is designed to control the literary market of the nation — and that to control the main outlets of free expression is to control free expression itself.

Sokolsky — L. A. Herald-Express, Aug. 28, 1946:

... The most important right of an author is self-expression, to say what he pleases ... to speak the truth as he sees it, against all the world, one man standing alone, if necessary.

A writer is not a drummer. He is a creative person with something in his mind and heart, as willing to risk the garret as to accept the emoluments and plaudits that come to him for his work.

(To be continued)

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C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

The following letter has been received from two SWG members, Jesse Lasky, Jr., and Fredric M. Frank:

Although we are heartily in favor of the objectives of the American Authors' Authority as described by James Cain in The Screen Writer for July 1946, there

are several questions which have occurred to us, which we would like answered.

- (1) Why is it necessary to change the present copyright law in order to implement the American Authors' Authority?

Nowhere in the literature of the sub-

ject have we found any specific suggestion as to what these changes might be, nor precisely what action would be taken by the "strong lobby in Washington," which Mr. Cain seems to feel is necessary. Although he disavows any political implications, a permanent lobby in Washington, Sacramento, or Medicine Hat, certainly smacks of contemplated political action.

(2) Why is the compulsory membership clause necessary to the success of the American Authors' Authority?

It seems to us that the idea of compulsory membership in any organization of writers springs from the fallacious concept that creative writing is a commodity in which all samples are equal and identical.

Stories are not sold in competition with each other on the open market like brands of butter, where price is the deciding factor. Actually, no two writers, even within the prescribed limitations of Hollywood, turn out precisely the same scripts. Since this is true we do not feel that "properties" will be bought solely because they are available for outright purchase. We do feel that the merits of the material will be the chief basis upon which purchase or license is made.

Whether the writer belongs to the American Authors Authority or Alcoholics Anonymous, or both, won't destroy the market value of a story of obvious merit. For instance, Edna Ferber was able to

dispose of a script to Warner Brothers on a licensing basis, and for a fat fee, at a time when practically everyone in and out of Hollywood was selling his material outright. Or giving it away.

The privilege of the individual author to dispose of his material in any manner that seems to be to his best interests should not be controlled or curtailed by any authority on earth. We fail to see that this prerogative jeopardizes the right of another writer to make use of whatever machinery is set up to dispose of his material, as he sees fit. We are opposed to the practice of monopoly, whether it be in the oil industry, or in the craft of writing.

No coercion should be necessary to attract membership as long as the Screen Writers' Guild and the American Authors Authority serve the best interests of their craft.

Our Guild should be a vessel of organized services dedicated to the protection of individual freedoms, rather than dictated compulsions in which the voice of the individual is drowned in the controlled "heils" of the obedient masses.

The objections expressed in this letter, it is felt, are answered by the further clarifications of AAA carried elsewhere in this issue, and in the general campaign of the AAA public relations committee to bring to the public a fuller understanding of the plan. The letter is being turned over to that committee for any further reply that may be deemed necessary.

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N E W S N O T E S

★ New York's Museum of Modern Art has begun a series of daily film showings to last through the end of 1947, and titled: *The History of the Motion Picture*. From Sept. 16 last, date of the opening bill, through June 5, 1947, the film in America 1895-1945 will be surveyed; on June 6-15, there will be a series of three

special programs (*A Short History of Animation, Theatrical and Social Dancing in Film, and Great Actresses of the Past*). *A Survey of the Film in Germany* will last from June 16 to Aug. 31; *The Film in France*, Sept. 1-Oct. 19; *Brief History of the Film in Sweden and England*, Oct. 20-Nov. 9; *A Survey of the Film in Russia*,

Nov. 10-Dec. 28, with the last three days of 1947 to be devoted to a program of abstract films. We will list the current programs monthly in future issues. The first 15 include: The Development of Narrative: The Execution of Mary Queen of Scots (1895), Washday Troubles (1896), A Trip to the Moon (Méliès, 1902), The Great Train Robbery (Porter, 1903), Rescued by Rover (1905), Possibilities of a War in the Air (1910), Queen Elizabeth (with Sarah Bernhardt, 1912), Sept. 16-19; The Rise of the American Film: A Corner in Wheat (Griffith, 1909), The New York Hat (1912), A Fool There Was (1914), Sept. 20-22; American Film Comedy (I - Chaplin): Making a Living, His New Profession, Getting Acquainted, The Knockout, The Rounders (all 1914), Sept. 23-26; American Film Comedy (II - Chaplin): The Tramp, A Woman, The Bank, Police (all 1915), Sept. 27-29; The Basis of Modern Technique (I - Griffith): Intolerance (1916), Sept. 30-Oct. 3; American Film Comedy (III - Chaplin): The Adventurer, The Immigrant, The Cure, Easy Street (all 1917), Oct. 4-6; American Film Comedy (IV): Stenographer Wanted (1910), Goodness Gracious (1914), Mickey (1918), Oct. 7-10; The Work of D. W. Griffith (2): Broken Blossoms (1919), Oct. 11-13; Von Stroheim & Realism (I): Blind Husbands (1919), Oct. 14-17; American Film Comedy (V - Sennett): Comrades (1911), Mabel's Dramatic Career (1913), The Surf Girl (1916), His Bread and Butter (1916), Astray from the Steerage (1920), Oct. 18-20; The Basis of Modern Technique (II - De-Mille): Male and Female (1919), Oct. 21-24; The Work of D. W. Griffith (III): Way Down East (1920), Oct. 25-27; The Films of Douglas Fairbanks (I): The Three Musketeers (1921), Oct. 28-31; The Basis of Modern Technique (III): Uncle Tom's Cabin (1903), Tol'able David (1921), Nov. 1-3; World War I in Retrospect (I): The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (1921), Nov. 4-7.

★ The American Contemporary Gallery in Hollywood, with its Series XVIII (from 1895 to the introduction of sound), will present a survey of German and French film techniques on the following Thursday and Friday evenings: Oct. 10-11, The Golem (extracts), and The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari; Oct. 17-18, The Last Laugh, and Hamlet (one sequence); Oct. 24-25, The Love of Jeanne Ney; Oct. 31-Nov. 1, Maedchen in Uniform; Nov. 7-8, Metropolis; Nov. 14-15, early Lumière-Brother films, and René Clair's first, The Crazy Ray; Nov. 21-22, Ménélmontant, Ballet mécanique, and Entr'acte; Nov. 28-29, The Passion of Joan of Arc; Dec. 5-6, The Italian Straw Hat; Dec. 12-13, A nous la liberté.

★ California Labor School, in San Francisco, has just completed a series of Sunday Film Nights, which included: Aug. 25, The Rainbow, and Sharecroppers; Sept. 1, Our Daily Bread, and The Silent Village; Sept. 8, Chaplin Festival (The Immigrant, The Rink, The Cure, and Easy Street), and The Story of Dr. Carver; Sept. 15, The New Gulliver, and People of the Cumberland; Sept. 22, Chekhov Festival (Marriage, and Jubilee), and The World We Want to Live in; Sept. 29, The Forgotten Village, and The Refugee — Today and Tomorrow. The school is planning a further series, of which programs will be carried as soon as available.

★ United Productions of America, whose Brotherhood of Man is featured in script and illustrations in the current issue of The Hollywood Quarterly, announces publication of a 29-page pamphlet, The Man in the Cage, written by Millard Kaufman, with 14 stills by Lew Keller, to be distributed to audiences viewing its film-strip of the same title, a strip made for the Fair Employment Practices Committee of California. Booklet and film are distributed through the Film Alliance of America, 1600 Broadway, N. Y., and are available locally through Assemblyman Augustus Hawkins, FEPC Headquarters, Spring Arcade Bldg., Los Angeles. . . Emerson Yorke Studios,

35 W. 45th St., N. Y. 19, send along an interesting clip-sheet on their three-reel *Lease on Life*, written by Marie McCall and George W. Sayre, and produced under the sponsorship of the National Tuberculosis Assn. Film appears to be doing an outstanding educational job in this vital health field. . . N. Y.'s Stanley Theatre, co-directed by Noel Meadow, a contributor to this magazine, recently presented the U. S. premiere of the French film, *The Postmaster's Daughter*, adapted from Pushkin's classic tale, and starring the late Harry Baur.

★ **WASHINGTON** — Word from the national capital tells of overflow audiences at the film showings, titled *Our World*, sponsored from July 17 to Aug. 27 by *The Washington Post* and *The District of Columbia Public Library*. Programs, for which Delphine Carpenter, of *The Post*, and Pare Lorentz, were essentially responsible, included: *Seeds of Destiny*, *The Covered Wagon*, *Out of the Ruins*, *Chang*, *The 400 Million*, *Power and the Land*, *The Plow that Broke the Plains*, *The Fleet that Came to Stay*, *The City*, *War Comes to America*, *Sea Power in the Pacific*, *The River*, *To the Shores of Iwo Jima*, *Granton Trawler*, and *The True Glory*. . . The *Library of Congress*, we are also told, has undertaken a new film-cataloguing project, beginning with newsreels, of which abstracts are made of the press-sheets and recorded on file-cards; presumably to be available to general libraries as are other Lib. of Cong. entries.

★ **ADVERTISING** — We noted the misleading ads used on the brilliant Italian Resistance film, *The Open City*, when it played at Hollywood's Esquire Theatre. The film has moved to another house, *The Studio*, and the ad campaign, if possible, has gotten even worse: "LOVE-CRAZED PASSION! Strange and startling love of two beautiful women! . . . (No one under 16 admitted)." We can only paraphrase that old adage: Protect us from our advertisers, we'll take care of our enemies ourselves.

A NOTE TO RECENT & NEW SUBSCRIBERS

There are still a few issues of *The Screen Writer* available as far back as November 1945. Recent subscribers interested in having a file of these back copies can receive them by advising *The Screen Writer* office that they would like to change the effective date of their subscription to the "earliest available" issue. Those copies which they have not previously received will be mailed them and their subscriptions will be redated to expire one year from the earliest issue so mailed.

New subscribers may still date their subscriptions to begin with the "earliest available" issue, the Nov. 1945 issue, or any issue since then. The first five issues, June-Oct. 1945, are out of print.

★ As announced last month, Pasadena Playhouse is reopening its season with F. Hugh Herbert's *For Keeps*, which runs through Oct. 13. . . . Next productions will be Maxwell Anderson's *Truckline Cafe*, Oct. 16-27; George Seaton's —But Not Goodbye, Oct. 30-Nov. 10; and Vina Delmar's *The Rich*, Full Life, Nov. 13-24.

★ Last month's production of Arthur Laurent's *The Home of the Brave*, at the Actors' Lab, was so successful that the Lab has taken it up to San Francisco, its first venture on the road. . . . Lab's next production will be Gogol's *The Inspector-General*, opening later this month.

★ The smash Broadway hit by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse, *State of the Union*, opened its nationwide tour here last month, to packed houses and with none of the timeliness gone from its pre-1948 campaign story, which is kept up to the minute by revision of key lines according to the newest important political developments.

★ SWG member Everett Wile, as announced here previously, has taken over the El Patio Theatre (formerly Hollywood Women's Club), on Hollywood Blvd., near LaBrea, and has turned it into a real year-round theatre for Hollywood, an institution that until now had been sadly lacking. Wile's partner in the venture is Sol Cornberg, who has had long technical experience with the Cleveland Playhouse. Two theatrical organizations, The Players Group, and the Beverly Hills Players, have already contracted for a good portion of the time, at eight-week stretches, with Wile and Cornberg planning their own productions to go into the house between these runs. First productions of the groups include Twentieth Century, Blind Alley, and Petrified Forest; the top acting names involved include Keenan Wynn, Tamara Geva, Lionel Stander, Tyrone Power, Lew Ayres, Robert Young, Herbert Rudley, and many more. In addition to these activities, the El Patio will have a Saturday morning children's theatre, as the central activity of a community group for aspiring young thespians, and it will house various radio shows during the day.

★ Father Was President, by SWG members Malvin Wald and Walter Doniger, has opened very successfully at the Phoenix Theatre, in Westwood Village. It is directed by Assemblyman Albert Dekker, who also plays the lead (Teddy Roosevelt).

★ SWG President Emmet Lavery's The Magnificent Yankee is about to start its cross-country tour. . . . Executive Board Member Henry Mvers has a new operetta, Gypsy Lady, on Broadway: a new book set to old Victor Herbert tunes.

★ SWG member Narda Stokes gets herself a fancy spread in the current issue of The Californian, with story, biography and pictures.

★ Mary McCall, Jr., True Boardman, Dudley Nichols, Allen Rivkin, Dore Schary, Helen Gahagan Douglas, Eddie Cantor, Ronald Reagan and Bette Davis were among the motion picture personalities

participating in the symposium on The Challenge of the Post-War World to the Liberal Movement, held in Los Angeles by The Nation Associates, Sept. 21-22.

★ Samson Raphaelson has just sold three short stories to Good Housekeeping and has made arrangements to do a series for that publication during the Fall and Winter.

★ SWG member Arch Whitehouse had a long piece (and a cover picture), Hollywood—The Way I See It, in the September Writer's Digest, which provoked some varied reactions among the brethren but was, whatever he may feel about Hollywood, a creditable piece of Guildsmanship.

★ AAA has apparently made James M. Cain an obsession with some people in the industry. In a recent column-squib, Daily Variety referred to the Academy-Award-winning Mildred Pierce as Mildred Cain!

★ Michael L. Simmons, PEC instructor in journalism, has written a textbook on Basic Journalism, to be published by Barnes & Noble this winter. Same firm will also bring out a pocket edition for general readers.

★ Strange Bedfellows, a new play by Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements, will be staged on Broadway this season by Richard Kollmar and Frank Satenstein.

★ SWG member Harold Goldman, with a long list of magazine publications behind him, has in the past few months had stories in Cosmopolitan and Liberty, and has sold additional ones to The Toronto Star, This Week and Liberty, for early publication.

★ SWG member Lewis Ossi has an article called Sailfish on Sewing Thread in the October Esquire. He is leaving shortly for Acapulco, where he plans to write, direct and produce three shorts on game fishing.

★ Stephen Longstreet's The Sisters Liked Them Handsome, recently published by Messner, has been doing a sprightly business in the bookstores.

★ SWG member Frank Scully is campaigning ardously as Democratic candidate for the California Assembly from the 57th (Hollywood) district. . . . Other film unionists running in the November elections are Newspaper Guildsman Gordon Williams, for Assembly in the 59th; Screen Actors' Guild member Helen Gahagan Douglas, for re-election to Congress in the 14th; and Assemblyman Everett Burkhalter, a studio technical worker in everyday life, for Congress in the 20th.

★ Contributor Charles A. Page (A Guilds Film Library, July) headed the Institute of World Affairs in Salisbury, Conn., this summer, and is now in Arizona, completing the translation from the French of a Claude Morgan novel for Reynal & Hitchcock, before assuming his new post with UNESCO.

★ Duell, Sloan & Pearce announce that Italian rights to SWG member Sam Fuller's Dark Page have been sold to the Casa Editrice Janus in Genoa. Also set for translation are John O'Hara's Hope of Heaven, in Italian; the same author's Appointment in Samarra, for Argentina; Armine Von Tempski's Aloha, in French; both are past SWG members.

★ Helen Colton, wife of SWG member Martin Field, has been appointed west coast editorial representative of The 16mm. Reporter & Factual Filmweek, published by David Bader, 545 Fifth Ave., N. Y. 17. Her column, The Hollywood Beat, was to start appearing in the Sept. 14 issue, and she says she will appreciate receiving news of writers' 16mm. activities (write to 1219 N. Beachwood Dr., Hollywood 38, or phone GRanite 4327). Miss Colton is also Hollywood editor for Film & Radio Guide, which regularly digests contents of The Screen Writer for its readers, in the audio-visual education field.

★ John Hubley, who was the original layout designer of The Screen Writer, is designing the eight animated sets for A Mirror for the Sky, Broadway musical to open in January: sets will be furnished by approximately 3,000 feet of color film and are expected to mark a new

departure in the field. . . . Herbert Klynn, current layout artist on this magazine, has just completed his 20th film for United Productions of America, the same independent cartoon studio which is handling the animated backgrounds for A Mirror for the Sky.

★ Robert Stephen Brode has sold a radio script, The Tunnel of Terror, to a Los Angeles advertising agency, for late fall production. . . . Brode also writes us of a recent review of his film, Sing While You Dance, which appeared in The Hollywood Review. A letter to the editor of that publication, thanking him for his unusually thoughtful credit to the screenwriter, brought this comment in print from Reed Porter: "You will always find writers getting all that is coming to them in (The Hollywood Review), with or without advertising." A sentiment we would like to see more widespread.

★ And, speaking of reviewers, a special nod is due to Milton Luban of The Hollywood Press-Times, who has not only consistently given writers proper credits in his film reviews, but has devoted column after column in that lively sheet to countering the slanderous attacks against writers, as individuals and as groups, which have been appearing not only in the anti-writer Hollywood Reporter but also in much of the general press, goaded by the progress of A. A. A.

SWG members are urged to bring to the attention of The Screen Writer production of their plays, publication of their novels and stories, or other non-motion picture literary activities, for listing in these News Notes.

★ Coronet and Esquire have advised us that they are deeply interested in receiving material and/or ideas for articles and stories from screen writers. Coronet editor Oscar Dystel was on the Coast some months ago to try to develop this source of material for the magazines, and Grace Fischler is now in charge of the office out here. Writers who think they might have something of interest for the

Smart publications are invited to phone Miss Fischler at CRestview 6-9948, or write her at 8749 Sunset Blvd., L. A. 46, for rates, requirements, and other information.

★ The name of the new cooperative magazine to be published by Associated Magazine Contributors some time in February (with the first issue dated March) has been revealed as '47, The Magazine of the Year. Each year the number will be changed, or keep it up to date. . . . Its \$300,000 stock issue is over two-thirds subscribed, California writers having gotten in on the deal including W. J. Furnas, Helen Colton, Andrew Loomis, William Ludwig, Virgil Partch, Gail Davenport, Upton Sinclair, Wallace Stegner, Irving Stone, Irving Wallace, Joseph Wechsberg, Oliver H. P. Garrett, Irwin Shaw, Richard G. Hubler, F. Hugh Herbert, George L. Randall, C. S. Forester, Zachary Gold—a good percentage of them, as can be seen, SWG members. . . . '47 is reported to be a wide-open literary market for those who are not as well as those who are stockholders: address manuscripts or correspondence to Jerome Ellison, John Whiting or Lawrence Lee, 68 W. 45 St., N. Y. C.

★ Tristram Tupper and Albert Love have formed a new publishing firm, Tupper & Love, Inc., at 20 Broad St., N.Y.C.

★ Leonard Fields, Broadway producer, was deluged with scripts as a result of the announcement here two months ago that he was looking for stageable properties. He has contracted for SWG member Maurice Clark's *The Boiling Point* (formerly titled *The First Column*) for January production. Those who may still wish to submit scripts to him can contact his local representative: Vic Shapiro, Chateau Marmont, HOLlywood 2911.

★ Hollywood Writers' Mobilization, in conjunction with the Mobilization for Democracy, is responsible for a vital new radio show, heard weekly on KLAC, Los Angeles, Mondays, 7:15 P.M., and to be made available by transcription to radio stations and civic organizations throughout the country. It is titled: *It IS Happening Here*, and it dramatizes the

recent Ku Klux Klan-inspired racial outrages of both local and national occurrence. The program has already been the subject of much controversy in the press, Los Angeles' Mayor Fletcher Bowron decrying it as excessively alarmist, while Attorney-General Robt. W. Kenny, honorary chairman of the Mobilization for Democracy, refers to it as a highly useful stimulant to law enforcement in a realm where the police are likely to be lax—if only for the reason that such incidents make for bad civic publicity. Jerome Epstein and Reuben Ship wrote the first script, Maurice Zimm the second, Ian McClellan Hunter the third, and David Hertz, Milton Merlin, Sam Moore, Jack Robinson, Milton Geiger, and others, are committed for later shows in the series, which is set to run through mid-December (13 weeks). Directors involved in the productions are Andy Potter, Milton Merlin, John Berry, Paul Stewart, Calvin Kuhl, Don Bernard, Owen Vinson, and others; leads have been played by Ronald Reagan, John Brown, Paul Henreid, with James Gleason, Margo, Eddie Albert, Melvyn Douglas, Frank Sinatra, Gene Kelly, Franchot Tone and Howard Da Silva listed for later appearances. All those participating, incidentally, are receiving Guild scales for their services.

HWM plans to make the transcriptions available throughout the country, with open ends to permit local civic organizations to include their own identification and programs for action for their communities.

★ Orson Welles has relinquished his air time, to concentrate on film production; a distinct loss to the forces of liberalism on the American air-waves. . . . His crusade against lynchings and racial discrimination, you may know, led to tearing down of posters of his film *Tomorrow is Forever*, and its virtual banning in Aiken, S. C.

★ Henry Morgan, the madcap of radio, recently told *Time* that he got his inspiration from reading about eight magazines regularly ranging from *The New Masses* and *The Nation* all the way over to *Fortune*. Somewhere in between, Morgan has

just added another entry: The Screen Writer. . . . This has led some of our members to believe that Hollywood may be an upcoming target for one of his very funny satirical broadcasts.

★ New curriculum of People's Educational Center, starting Oct. 7, includes following writing and motion picture courses: Motion Picture Direction, Thursdays, 8:30-10 P.M., Frank Tuttle, coordinator, Herbert Biberman, Vincent Sherman, Irving Pichel, Paul Ivano, Kenneth Macgowan, Hugo Friedhofer and others, guest lecturers; Screenwriting I, Mondays, 7-8:30 P.M., Robert Lees; Screenwriting II, Tues., 8:30-10, Howard Dimsdale; Screenwriting III, Tues., 7-8:30, Val Burton; Screenwriting IV, Thurs., 7-8:30, Hugo Butler; Radio-writing (Comedy), Mon., 7-8:30, Louis Quinn; Basic Journalism, Mon., 7-8:30, Michael Simmons; The Modern Novel, Mon., 8:30-10, Guy Endore and John Sanford; Short Story, Wed., 8:30-10, Sid Schumann; Modern Playwriting, Wed., 7-8:30, Charles Milholland; Creative Writing and Composition, Wed., 8:30-10, Hugh Campbell. Also many other

courses in labor problems, current events, economics, politics, psychology, and so on. Of special interest is a new series of lectures, Tuesday nights, 8:30-10, to be given at the Screen Cartoonists' Hall, on Great American Novels & Novelists. Lecturers will be John Howard Lawson, Morton Grant, Alvah Bessie, John Sanford, Arnold Manoff, Guy Endore, Vera Caspary and Carleton Moss.

★ The Johnston Office's weekly letter to organizations serviced by its Department of Studio and Public Service (women's clubs, P.-T.A.s, etc.), What's Happening In Hollywood, has resumed publication after its usual summer suspension. September subjects included Summer Recollections, Motion Pictures for the Family, Audience Research, Inc., and Trends for the New Season. October will be Writers' Month, apparently. The subjects to be treated are: Writing for the Screen Adapting the Novel, Filming the Stage Play, and Screen Originals. These will undoubtedly be watched with keenest interest by members of the writing craft. Subjects of What's Happening In Hollywood for the rest of the year

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by

JAMES M. CAIN

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are listed as: The Producer's Blue Print, Casting the Leading Roles, Scouting for New Talent, The Studio Casting Director, Central Casting Corporation, The International Outlook, The Documentary Film, and Education through Films.

★ Producer Hal Wallis has been designated to represent the motion picture industry at the annual Nobel Dinner in New York this year, according to Jacques F. Ferrand, secretary of the American Nobel Foundation.

★ Wehman Bros., 712 Broadway, N. Y., call to our attention their extensive catalogue of gag and comedy mate-

rial, described as "headquarters for humor and comedy material in the U. S." Interested writers may get the impressive listings of available jokebooks, thesaurus of humor and anecdota americana, by writing to the above address.

★ Books received: The Art of the Motion Picture, by Jean Benoit-Lévy, Director of Films & Visual Information for the United Nations (Coward-McCann); Select Plays, 1946-47 (Heuer); Plays, 1946-47 (Art Craft Play Co.); The Groom Said No!, and There'll Come a Day, by Ruth and Nathan Hale (Heuer); So Help Me!, by Albert Johnson (Heuer).

★ ★ ★ WANTED: VOLUNTEER CLIPPING SERVICES

Various activities of the Screen Writers' Guild, such as the publication of The Screen Writer and the launching of the plan for the AAA, have made us particularly newsworthy, it seems. References to the Guild, the magazine, the AAA, and those connected with them, have multiplied tenfold in the national press within the past few months.

Although we subscribe to two national clipping services, we find that their services do not succeed in giving us complete coverage, and that the clippings arrive with a delay which often makes them too stale to warrant answer or comment. This has accounted for our being unable to start before this issue anything like an exhaustive survey of press comment on AAA.

The editors of The Screen Writer and the SWG office force would deeply appreciate the efforts of any readers or members who might constitute themselves volunteer clipping services and forward to us any articles, columnists' comments, or other items dealing with the Guild, The Screen Writer, or AAA.

Wherever possible, such clippings will be personally acknowledged, and they will be equally appreciated whether from national publications or little local sheets. The smaller the publication in which the item appears, the less likely we are to catch it ourselves or get it from the professional clipping services; the larger the publication, the more likely we are to need several copies for the various files of SWG, AAA and the magazine. So, don't hesitate to send in any such items you may come across. Thanks in advance.

★ ★ ★ F A C T S A N D F I G U R E S

The charts appearing on the next two pages were prepared for the Screen Writers' Guild, like those published in previous issues, by the National Labor Bureau of San Francisco, under the direction of Henry P. Melnikow.

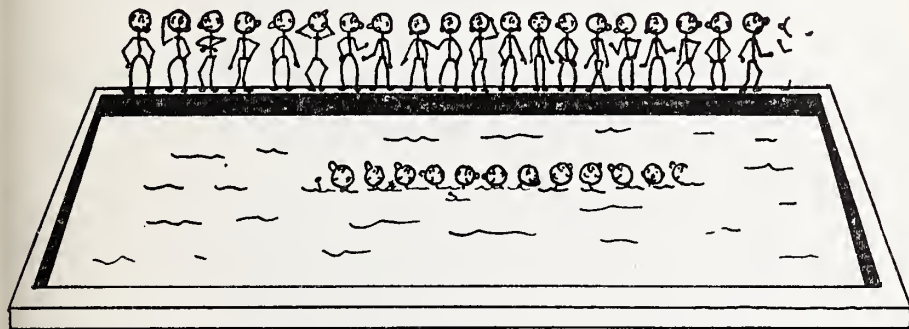
The present charts deal specifically with the problems of frequency and length of employment in the minimum wage brack-

ets, and annual incomes of writers in those brackets. They give a particular cogency to the arguments presented by Vice-President Lester Cole in his article on PP. 20-24 of this issue.

Like the preceding ones, these charts will be referred to from time to time in future Screen Writer articles. We urge all interested readers to keep them for reference purposes.

Distribution of Employment

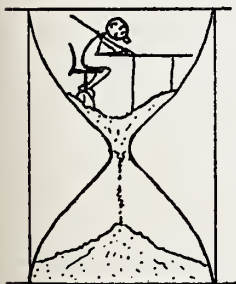
In the six month period Nov. 1, 1945 - April 30, 1946 out of a total pool of screen writers in the salary bracket \$125 - \$300 per week, only 37.2 % appeared on the payroll. 62.8 % didn't even get their feet wet.



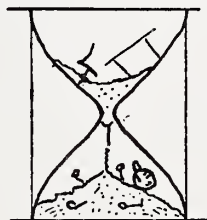
Each figure represents 10 writers.

The 37.2 % who appeared on the payroll —

Worked 62 %
of the time —

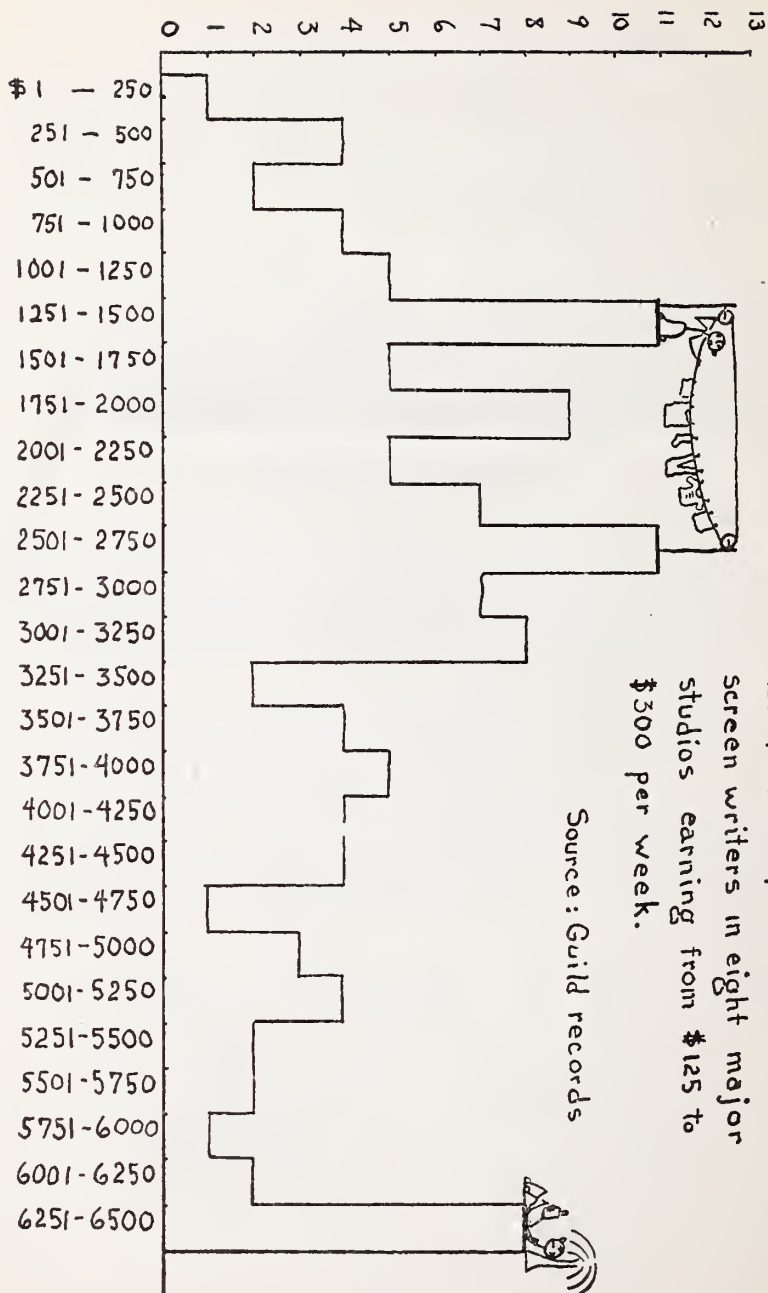


Were unemployed
38 % of the time.



Source: Guild Records.

No. of writers



Distribution of semi-annual earnings
Nov. 1, 1945 - April 30, 1946 for all
screen writers in eight major
studios earning from \$125 to
\$300 per week.

NEXT MONTH AND THEREAFTER

LAU SHAW • HOLLYWOOD FILMS IN CHINA
JEAN BRY • GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MOTION PICTURE STUDIES
DALTON TRUMBO • THE CRAFT OF THE SCREEN WRITER
PHILIP DUNNE & M. WM. POMERANCE •
• MINIMUM ANNUAL WAGE — YES OR NO?
A COMMUNICATION ON THE STATUS OF WRITERS IN CHINA

And further articles by LEWIS AMSTER, HUGO BUTLER, MARTIN FIELD,
SHERIDAN GIBNEY, LEWIS HERMAN, ARTHUR KOBER, VLADIMIR
POZNER, ROBERT ROSSEN, HAROLD J. SALEMSON, RICHARD
SCHWEIZER, ARTHUR STRAWN, LOUIS ADAMIC, F. HUGH HERBERT,
MAURICE RAPF, and others.

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Paul Romaine - Books, 184 N. La Salle St., Chicago 1

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Books 'n' Things, 73 Fourth Ave., New York 3
Brentano's - Periodical Department, 586 Fifth Ave., New York 19
44th St. Bookfair, 133 W. 44th St., New York 19
Four Seasons Bookshop, 21 Greenwich Ave., New York 14
Gotham Book Mart, 51 W. 47th St., New York 19
Kamin Dance Bookshop and Gallery, 1365 Sixth Ave., at 56th St., New York 19
Lawrence R. Maxwell - Books, 45 Christopher St., New York 14

PENNSYLVANIA:

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NOVEMBER, 1946

HOLLYWOOD FILMS IN CHINA

LAU SHAW

I KNOW practically nothing about the business side of how American motion pictures have been managed, distributed and prospered for the last forty years or so in China. All I am trying to say here is what I happen to know about American films as a cultural and educational influence to the Chinese people. It is true that American motion pictures are, primarily, productions of a money-making industry. But, paradoxically enough, they soon become a living force of education and culture, in spite of their non-educational and non-cultural attitude and intention. Otherwise, boys and girls of Peking and Shanghai would not have learned so many different ways of kissing and fighting as only Hollywood could have demonstrated to them.

So far as I can remember, Hollywood films shown in China about

LAU SHAW is the distinguished author of *Rickshaw Boy* and one of China's leading writers. He is currently on a study tour of the United States as a guest of the State Department.

35 years or so ago were mostly short comedies and long serials of adventurous stories of murder and kidnapping. There were then very few theatres properly built for showing them. Old opera houses, with their wooden benches and large square stages, were used for the "electric shadow" shows. Names of the stars and titles of pictures were of no importance. The inimitable Chaplin was known simply as the "Small Mustache," and "Long Beard" was given to some old-timer who happened to have that particular make-up. Both the short comedies and long serials pleased the audience well. If they could not fully understand some other stories, they could not possibly fail to laugh at the poor foreign devil who got a currant pie thrown right at his big nose. The long serials of kidnapping and rescuing were also easy to follow since the folk stories of China had long been written or recited in the very same manner.

Gradually, proper movie houses were built in large cities, and "going to the shadow show" became quite fashionable. While venerable grand-dams closed their eyes to the ugly scenes of kissing and necking, the young innocents simply devoured them. It is true that the new ethical and social ideas of the West had come to China long before the films, yet what could mere ideas do when compared with such vivid, daring, and "terrific" examples shown on the screen. The barriers and taboos that set Chinese boys and girls apart for ages were crushed overnight. A single ten-cent ticket brought the young to the very door of a new world where romance and adventure were as common as chopsticks and tea cups.

The New Chinese Theatre movement, in which dramas and plays were written, designed and produced in the European manner instead of following the opera drama tradition of old China, helped the moviegoers to look at American films from a new angle as they were closely related with dramatic art and deserved to be regarded as an art. Names of stars began to be lionized, and titles of pictures translated with care into the most colorful and alluring words. When, if I remember correctly, *Way Down East* with Lillian Gish as leading lady and Chaplin's *A Dog's Life* came to China, numerous articles written by dramatic critics appeared in periodicals and newspapers, all praising the superb artistic achievements of the stars and the productions. People began to know

that beside the star there was somebody else who was also essential in the making of a movie, namely the director. De Mille and Griffith and many others began to be known in the East. Stories of Way Down East and A Dog's Life were both simple and touching, and the Chinese people always like a simple and touching story.

When Way Down East was shown in Peking, an interpreter was engaged to narrate the story scene by scene to the audience. This device was, however, soon dropped, as it was expensive to the theatre and strenuous to the narrator. Instead, a glass panel, on which simple sentences were written in Chinese to tell the audience something about the story, was provided at one or both sides of the stage. This is still practiced up till today, even for the talkies. To a non-English-speaking audience, this is indeed much to be desired, if it is always so managed that the dialogue-slides exactly correspond to the motion of the picture. Unfortunately, the slides are more often than not either far ahead of or far behind the scenes with which they are supposed to synchronize, and it gives the helpless audience a headache. Some of the recent talkies made another trial by having Chinese interpretations printed in the lower part of the picture. They are clear and precise. But they often mix up with the lower setting of the picture: a huge Chinese character is sometimes sitting on a chair or right on a lady's delicate foot. Again the audience gets a headache.

It is really surprising to see that in Kunming, where I stayed for a while in 1942, the smaller movie houses still had an interpreter on the stage. To him, every leading lady is a Mary and every hero a John. Besides, he does not know a bit more about the story of the picture than the audience, but just gives a free and improvised interpretation of his own. When a man in the picture is playing a violin, the narrator will say: "Now, a man is playing the Pih-Pa" (Chinese lute), and when the same musician plays quicker and quicker, the narrator will tell: "Now, the man is mad and wants to break his Pih-Pa!" In spite of the narrator's ignorance and nonsense, people in the interior of China prefer to go to a movie house where such a fool can be found. The reason is perhaps that no matter what he says, he says it in Chinese.

It is, I think, the right place here, to point out that the Chinese movies, poor in technique and in equipment as they are, have a very

good chance to compete with productions of Hollywood for these reasons: Firstly, the stories in the Chinese movies are inevitably Chinese, easy to understand and appreciated by the Chinese audience. Secondly, in order to save expenses, most Chinese movies are simple in setting, but if a simple story has plenty of laughter and tears, it would appeal to the Chinese sense of simplicity and directness in a piece of beauty and art. It is true that pictures like *Ben Hur* and *Ten Commandments*, with their magnificent settings and maddening crowds, cannot fail to hold the Chinese audience spellbound, yet pictures as simple as *Watch on the Rhine* and *Over the Hill* are perhaps more to their taste. Thirdly, the tempo of most of the Chinese pictures is not so fast as that of Hollywood productions, but people of the East are, as a rule, slow and unable to keep pace with the rapid rhythm of the American movies. Therefore, the diction in the Chinese talkies is invariably slow and clear. With the deliberate and slow deliverance, the Chinese talkies often miss the naturalness of speech and acting and are sometimes lacking in dramatic effects. But, on the other hand, people who pay the box office price really want to get something they can talk about to their friends and their family after enjoying the show. They do not like to miss a single word in a Chinese talkie. Lastly, quite a great number of the Chinese pictures have a tragic story. The Chinese are, somewhat like the ancient Greeks, more sympathetic with failures and sufferings than success and glory. Heroes and sages most respected and admired like Confucius, Kuan Yu and Yueh Fei, were all failures and tragic figures, in spite of their wisdoms and virtues. In the same sense, the theme that "the boy does not get the girl" gives a flavor of sweet sorrow which lasts much longer than the conventional happy ending. With the advent of the modern Chinese literature, which reflects the social, national and world consciousness of modern China, some of the Chinese movies also try to be serious-minded in the fight against social evils. To mention only a few, pictures like *Humanity*, *Song of the Fisherman*, which won an award in the movie exhibition in Soviet Russia, *Street Angel* and *At the Cross Roads*, were all very satisfying in content and in form. As a matter of fact, no Hollywood productions could rival with them for popularity, as they were the only pictures made for and by the Chinese.

This is, however, by no means to say that Hollywood movies have

been frustrated by the Chinese ones. On the contrary, the competition among the movies of various nations in China has schooled the Chinese movie-goers to discern what the good and bad qualities of a picture are. A perfect picture, no matter whether it is made in Hollywood, Shanghai or Moscow, would be successful and a bad one a flop. Competition sharpens the sense of judgment. China is old, terribly old, but she knows that she has to adjust herself in an amazingly new world. Technically she is eager to learn from Hollywood. At the same time she will certainly try to give the Chinese audience something Hollywood does not care to know at all. For, if the Chinese movies were to follow blindly the ways in which Hollywood films are made, they could only produce fakes and duplicates, which would be the death-toll of themselves. On the other hand, if Hollywood blindly stuffs the Chinese market with stories of cowboys and murderers, that market will sooner or later be lost. The superiority of Hollywood's stars and technicians alone cannot make Hollywood safe and secure as the leading entertaining industry all over the world for ever. The influence exerted by Hollywood over the morals and culture of human kind must become a conscious effort in its appeal to the better part of human nature. The world of ours is changing from hour to hour. It is true that the success enjoyed by American films has been attributed to the folly of human nature as well as that of Hollywood. But I am told that Soviet Russia has been boycotting that folly for a long time.

The worst part of Hollywood's folly has been to make some pictures about China with the emphatically "Hollywoodian" idea and imagination of what poor old China should be. It seems to be that the directors of these pictures were obsessed with the purpose of seeking the difference between the East and West, and overlooked the similarities of human nature. The result is inevitably deplorable. The Chinese people are, as a rule, so humorous and good-natured that they are capable of laughing at themselves. But when they see a picture supposed to present their way of life while actually far remote from reality, they feel cheated and disgusted. The only pictures about China tolerated by the Chinese are, I believe, *The Good Earth* and *Dragon Seed*, as they had the good intention of treating the Chinese as human beings instead of as slanting-eyed devils.

To my mind, a balanced conception of art is that while it serves to entertain, it also gives the mind some awakening and elevation. Hollywood productions sometimes just miss that balance. Take the Marx brothers for an example: there is no doubt that they are very learned and talented actors, but their pictures have never appealed much to the Chinese. Their subtle puns and hyperboles cannot be understood even by those who know the English language tolerably well. The situations they create seem like nightmares to us. Once I took my sister-in-law and my niece, the former an educated lady, the latter a student at high school, to see one of their pictures. I asked them how they liked it. They smiled and shook their heads a bit. On the other hand, no picture of Chaplin's has failed to bring forth a packed house in which everybody, educated as well as illiterate, was well pleased. Chaplin is ever universal. He entertains and he also gives something to the heart and mind of the audience as a valuable gift.

I must admit that Hollywood does sometimes give a good show, entertaining as well as instructive. But unfortunately this kind of picture, as often as not, takes some historical episode or a story from a well-known novel of the West as its subject-matter which is unfamiliar to the Orient. For instance, *Zola* and *David Copperfield* are indeed good pictures and highly recommended by all the refined Chinese. But the common people, who have never heard of Zola and Dickens, simply could not make head or tail out of it. The Marx brothers' pictures and the representations of history and literature are, it seems, the two extremes; the former cares about nothing beyond the riotous acting and the latter requires a lot of preparation from the audience. To avoid such extremities, I would suggest that a really good picture for the East must have a good story that gives something to the audience, yet does not demand too much preparation. The *Gold Rush*, *Way Down East*, *Resurrection*, *Ben Hur* and *Snow White* seem to be the ideal pictures to the East. For they all have a good story, easy to understand and are very entertaining as well as highly instructive.

(Ed. note: For further news of China and Chinese writers, see the report by C. P. Wan and S. Y. Shu, page 35.)

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THE LESSONS OF CANNES

JUDITH PODSELVER

FROM Sept. 20 to Oct. 5, in Cannes, on the French Riviera, hundreds of journalists and film technicians from all over the world underwent a steady motion picture diet from morning to night. Strangely, this International Film Festival revealed nothing that could be called striking from a screen writer's point of view: the numerous documentaries we saw had much more originality of subject and presentation than most of the full-length features.

Breadth of scope was somewhat reduced by the fact that most of the European countries showed several Resistance pictures — necessarily not dissimilar in subject matter or treatment. Moreover, of the eight Russian films projected, four (*Zoya*, *Girl No. 217*, *Berlin*, and *The Decisive Turn*) seemed more like documentaries than commercial features.

In that category, the best were easily the Italian pictures, *The Open City*, and *Un Giorno nella Vita* (*A Day Out of Life*).

France contributed some interesting variations to the subject by placing it in a historical period and thus giving it a more general character, as in *Patrie*, or presenting it in straight documentary fashion, as in the magnificent *La bataille du rail* (*The Battle of the Railroads*).

All of these pictures are far better than anything on the subject of the Resistance produced in the U. S. They should prove to American producers that it is best to stop sending to Europe American-made

JUDITH PODSELVER, French journalist and motion picture production assistant, recently returned to France after spending the war period in New York (OWI) and Hollywood. She covered the International Film Festival at Cannes on special assignment for THE SCREEN WRITER.

stories of what happened there, and leave the field to those who actually lived through the Resistance. There is too wide a gap, apparently, between the American and the European perception on this subject. Even such a slight detail as the too-sentimental portrayal of Claude Rains as a German agent in *Notorious* might prevent the picture from being accepted in certain parts of Europe where a kindly German is simply not conceivable.

Beside the Resistance films, there were also the usual number of historical films, portraying the spirit of each nation (Portugal's *Camoens*, for instance, and Czechoslovakia's *The Bachelor*), and especially biographies of great composers. These, in effect, are only pretexts for a series of period settings and musical interludes, acceptance of which depends on your taste for the music and your appreciation of the unseen virtuosos performing for the sound-track. Practically every country contributed one of these: *Glinka* (U.S.S.R.), *Rhapsody in Blue* (U.S.A.), *The Magic Bow* (Paganini — Great Britain), *Amanti in Fuga* (Stradella — Italy).

Among the rest, the specific film subjects, there was hardly a single original screenplay to be noted. Producers, guided by an almost maniacal fear of any new idea, continue to draw heavily upon the existing literature of their respective countries. In many cases, the screen writer's only duties were to retain the dialogue of the play or book and provide the cameraman or art director with opportunities for production-value shots or settings, as in Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*, or the Russian version of Jack London's *White Fang*.

André Gide's *La symphonie pastorale*, which had its world première at the Festival, didn't quite measure up to the high hopes with which it had been anticipated. The parable of the Protestant minister whose faith blinds him so he doesn't recognize his love for his blind ward until she has been cured, was of course impossible to shoot as Gide had depicted it. The screenplay by Jean Aurenche — which Gide himself approved — humanizes the situation and brings the protagonists down to earth. But then the story loses its original eerie Christian atmosphere and the problem unfortunately calls to mind Michèle Morgan's first important picture, *Gribouille*, in which she was also the center of a conflict between father and son. However, the screenplay has retained a number of highly dramatic moments: a silent love scene at the organ

between the blind girl and the pastor's son; the girl mistaking the son for the father when first her sight is restored; and, at the end, a climax which Gide himself had avoided in the book, but which proves quite effective.

The other major event of the Festival, combining literature and film again, was the première of Jean Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast*, a highly original experiment, but one not likely to be repeated. Cocteau adapts the fairy-tale to the screen by alternating life and fantasy. Life is treated in comedy scenes almost out of Molière, and the fantasy in beautiful shots reminiscent of Rembrandt and Watteau. There is, of course, a dramatic intensity about the problem of the man who is ugly outside but good inside. However, Cocteau's fantasy is too coldly intelligent and calculated. It doesn't ever create the necessary emotional atmosphere of magic which would allow us to be carried away by the picture.

Cocteau's fairy-tale was one of the few attempts at escapist films shown at the Festival. Strangely enough, two of the others were provided by Russia. The *Stone Flower* turned out to be a charming and simple Russian fairy-tale, the main quality of which was that it looked like a hand-illuminated manuscript. It was shot in Agfacolor, with infinite care for the color schemes, that had beautiful results. (The Russians seem to obtain wonderful colors with Agfacolor, as evidenced in their documentary, *The Youth of Our Country*.) *Hello, Moscow!* is a Russian attempt at a musical show, Hollywood style, charming in the passages dealing with children and, on the whole, pretty good entertainment, but badly constructed. From flashback to flashback, the trend of the story gets lost. Those were the only really amusing films shown at Cannes, except for Danny Kaye in *Wonder Man*.

Despite language difficulties (the films being shown without translated subtitles), Danny Kaye was a hit with the Cannes audience. There is a complete lack of comedies in Europe nowadays. Something terrible seems to have happened during the past years to people's powers in the fun department. Everybody looks toward America to send them more slapstick, gags, musicals, in short, strictly entertainment films.

But, in addition to comic relief, there is also a definite need for more human stories portraying everyday problems. The warm welcome

extended at Cannes to the British picture, *Brief Encounter*, is evidence of this. The subject (from a Noel Coward playlet) was a difficult one: a married woman meets a married man, they fall desperately in love, but must of necessity stop seeing each other after three brief meetings. The story is told in a running first-person commentary by the woman, with several flashbacks. Production costs must have been unusually low, sets are reduced to a minimum, yet the story is told so simply and movingly, the details are so true, the dialogue so restrained, that the thing emerges as a gripping tale.

The Cannes audience reflected the prevailing European feeling that a good picture must have an important subject, either something affecting the spectator personally, or something dealing with human experience in general. Most Europeans are amazed at the skill expended in Hollywood just to create an atmosphere of suspense, as in films such as *Notorious* or *Gaslight*, which they consider excellent, but not great, pictures, certainly not of a class to be entered in an International Festival. They feel that if thrillers are produced, the expenditure need certainly not be so great, but if the aim is to make a costly, impressive film, the subject matter must be treated in a more serious vein, with more realism.

The realistic treatment of an American problem, so great a film rarity, is what made *The Lost Weekend* a hit in Cannes, as it had been before in the U. S. People want pictures of life in America, but on the subject of realism there is an enormous gap between European and American approaches. (One of the most admired short subjects here was a Swedish re-creation of human sacrifice in prehistoric times!) Europeans expect life to be portrayed as it is — and most of them have recently seen it at its worst. The absence of certain aspects of life from Hollywood films gives the American output an artificial atmosphere which largely invalidates it.

One revelation of the Festival, along these lines, was the renascent Italian production of the past few months: it is crude, but it is dramatic, and it is chock-full of life and has a fast pace. Of all the American films shown at Cannes, on the other hand, *The Lost Weekend* alone was concerned with life. The audience wondered whether the proportion was due simply to an unfortunate choice of the pictures submitted, or

whether the selection could be considered typical of presentday U. S. production.

Brackett and Wilder's screenplay for *The Lost Weekend*, which met with approval on every score (except perhaps its artificial ending), however, shares a defect common to practically all the non-documentaries shown at Cannes: its hero talks too much. This is especially noticeable in a Festival such as this where the audience sits through hours of assorted foreign dialogues, without benefit of subtitles.

All over the world, apparently, dialogue writers have run amuck. The French picture, *Le revenant* (*The Ghost*), is strictly a field-day for Henri Jeanson, and the same can be said for the dialogue writers of most of the Swedish, Egyptian or Danish pictures shown.

That unfortunate overabundance of words may, by contrast, have been part of the cause of the huge success of Mexico's entry, *Maria Candelaria*, which seemed in many ways to be reverting to silent-film techniques. It is reminiscent of *Dovchenko*. And along with a minimum of dialogue, it has impressive camera work, a touching story and excellent acting: all of which combined to make it the sensation of Cannes.

The same elements may have accounted for the enthusiastic reception given to *Farrebique*, a French picture exhibited in Cannes, not at, but simultaneously with, the Festival. It shows the life of a French peasant family throughout the course of a year, a sort of French counterpart to *The Southerner*. It is in need of editing, but it introduces some beautiful accelerated shots.

In summary, it appears that the Cannes Festival proved several things: original film subjects, new ideas, are at a low ebb all over the world. Dialogue is generally too verbose. Technically, England, Italy and France have little to learn about good plot construction and story development. Once in a while, other countries, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, or Portugal, know how to tell a story effectively. However, American pictures are still tops technically. But that is not the point. People have come to expect the best from the U. S. Now, they expect GREAT films which will go down in their annals as mileposts. And the reason why certain American films which might have been in that class were not sent to Cannes remains a mystery.

After seeing *Gilda*, particularly, many were heard saying that, if

this was representative of American production, within six months no one would be going to see Hollywood films any more. Neither *Gilda*, nor *Rhapsody in Blue*, nor *Anna and the King of Siam*, effectively represents American production of the four years during which Europeans were deprived of it, nor are they representative of Hollywood's best latest efforts.

It is regrettable that there was not more interest in the Festival in the United States. Cannes has been a successful event, and it came at a time which was important for American producers. The U. S. has recently signed film agreements with various European countries. According to all European spokesmen, these agreements are of a character ultimately to strangle their national production.

Such agreements would seem to imply that the U. S. is sending masterpieces to Europe — yet, of all the pictures shown here, none except *The Lost Weekend* justifies the U. S. claim to supremacy.

Let us hope that next year's Festival will arouse more interest in the U. S., that the selection of the films sent will be more judicious, and especially that the crop from which to choose will be better. The American industry has licked the technical problems — now it has to concentrate on good subjects.



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The election of new studio chairmen, co-chairmen and stewards will take place as soon as possible after the general Guild elections of Nov. 13. These elections will be held either at the regular luncheon meetings or at special ones, whenever the fullest attendance can be arranged.

YOU ARE OLD, FATHER WILKERSON

(With profuse apologies to Lewis Carroll)

F. HUGH HERBERT

In his column of Sept. 12, 1946, Mr. W. R. Wilkerson took to reminiscing about "the days of his youth." This phrase evoked the memory of Alice in Wonderland, of which this is the result.

"You are old, Father Wilkerson," the young writer said,
"And you stand on your head half the night
And then you repeatedly claim to see Red.
Do you think at your age that is right?"

"In my youth," Father Wilkerson whispered, "my son,
I feared it might injure the brain.
But now that I'm perfectly sure I have none
Why I do it again and again."

"You are old," said the writer, "and weak for your build,
You are flabby without being fat.
Yet you always turn back flips at any old Guild.
Pray, what is the reason of that?"

F. HUGH HERBERT, a member of the Executive Board of SWG and of the Editorial Committee of THE SCREEN WRITER, is the distinguished playwright of such comedies as Kiss and Tell, and a veteran screen writer.

"In my youth," said the publisher, pounding his chest,
"I conceived my beloved Reporter,
A racket, my son, and the finest and best.
May I sell you a page — or a quarter?"

"You are old," said the youth, "and your jaws are too weak
For anything tougher than suet,
Yet you take on all Guilds with their bones and their beaks.
Pray, how do you manage to do it?"

"In my youth," said the man, "I was always a bore,
Preaching platitudes, terrors and strife,
And the muscular strength which it gave to my jaw
Has lasted the rest of my life."

"You are old," said the youth, "one would hardly suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever.
Yet you balance producers all over your nose.
What made you so awfully clever?"

"I have answered three questions and that is enough,"
Said the man as he reached for his roscoe.
"Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff
Which emanates straight out of Moscow?"

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REGARDING THE HORSE OPERA

JULIAN ZIMET

GEE, Mom! Why can't I go see the Lone Ranger?" Johnny Jones is close to tears. "All the other kids are going!"

Mrs. Jones is very patient.

"You know I don't like you to see those cowboy pictures, son. All that ridiculous shooting and fighting isn't good for you."

But Johnny Jones doesn't understand. He likes the Lone Ranger more than the pleasant, unbloody family pictures that his mother thinks he ought to see. Though this fact disappoints Mrs. Jones, who would like to see her boy with a more advanced appreciation of movies, books, and radio programs, it happens that there is a good deal to justify Johnny's choice.

What is he certain to enjoy in a Western that is not guaranteed him in a vehicle for Margaret O'Brien and Mickey Rooney or any of the films presumably concerned with the problems of the younger generation?

The first and greatest satisfaction that Johnny derives from a shoot-em-up oater is the letting off of steam. Johnny has built up quite a head for it. Just because he doesn't have to work in a factory or walk three miles through a blizzard to school doesn't mean that growing up isn't difficult, serious business. If the world is a tough proposition for adults today, it's equally rugged for children.

One of the things that build up tension in the average child is the emphasis in our world on competition. In the classroom, on the baseball

JULIAN ZIMET, a screen writer who has worked on westerns, including the Gene Autry and Roy Rogers series, as a writer and assistant producer, recently returned from four years in the Army Signal Corps.

diamond, in the race for possessions like fishing tackle and bicycles; the successful boy is singled out for approval. Even if the family doesn't foster these ideas of the importance of winning, public opinion, as represented by his friends, their parents, and his teachers, imposes on Johnny the obligation to be successful.

As he obviously can't win all the time, or even most of the time, he builds up a reservoir of dissatisfaction and tension.

This reservoir has tributaries. The contradictions in our society, the contrast between what he is taught of the Golden Rule and the experienced reality of dog eat dog to which he has to adjust; the failure of parents to live up to the standards that they set for themselves; these obstacles and many others are faced by every child.

At any rate, when on Saturday afternoon Johnny and his friends go down to the Bijou, check their cap pistols at the box office, and settle down in the darkened theater, he brings with him as heavy a load of tensions as burden Mr. and Mrs. Jones when they slip out to the movies for an evening's relaxation after a tough week.

On the screen appears a cowboy, brave, loyal, and true. He's in a tough spot. An evil, powerful enemy is menacing him and all that he holds dear. Johnny's heart goes out to the good guy. They join forces, and together, for sixty wonderful minutes, they battle the heavy up hill and down dale, until evil is worsted and justice emerges triumphant.

Johnny is relieved and rejuvenated in a way that does not occur when he views a more complex, adult picture. Indeed, the latter often leave him confused and tense because the problems of right and wrong are too complex for his juvenile mind to resolve.

The show at the Bijou over, he comes home, after the management turns on the lights and clears him out of the theater. His cap pistol is stuck in his belt and he has a tendency to shoot first and yell afterwards, but he is relaxed. Mrs. Jones finds that he is not so inclined to protest his kid sister's playing with his toys and that he is even amenable to helping with the supper dishes, so that his mother and father can make the early show at the Rivoli.

There are many ways that Johnny lets off steam; dramatic play, games, books, comic strips, radio programs. The cowboy picture is one of these ways and a relatively harmless one.

The phrase, "relatively harmless," however, may obscure several grievous sins of which the cowboy picture is guilty. Art has a function beyond relieving tension. It must instruct, persuade, and inspire. We want art for our children that will increase their understanding of the world they face, extend their vision of the future, and make them strong and capable of realizing that vision.

By these standards, the cowboy picture has severe limitations. Significant among these is the fact that the fundamental concept of the cowboy hero is anti-social in that it emphasizes individual achievement over cooperative activity. The Hero is always seen as a lone individual struggling against a group; the Robin Hood outlaw versus an unjust administration or the honest sheriff pitted against organized corruption and crime. The baddie is always in cahoots with a gang — the goodie is always on his own. This convention of the lone hero is so firmly established that the very mention of group activity carries connotations of villainy. Because hope for the future so manifestly lies in the direction of cooperative activity among men and nations, the affirmation of an outmoded tradition of individual achievement is anti-social.

Another major fault of the garden variety of western is its insistence on success as the inevitable concomitant of right thinking and clean living. The hero, by a single act of derring-do, rights all wrongs and worsts all evil doers. It's a big, wow success he achieves — every time — and not by virtue of any Superman talents — but because truth and justice ride by his side. Right triumphs over might. The fiction that "my strength is as the strength of ten because my heart is pure" is perpetuated. Individual success is promised to every child who abides by the precepts of virtue exemplified in his cowboy hero.

What are the consequences of the child believing this lie? He is led to expect a reward which he will, in all likelihood, never receive. His goal is total, uncompromising individual success, at whatever he undertakes. The socially approved goals of wealth, power, and love glitter invitingly in his imagination, and failure to achieve them comes as a crippling blow.

Subconsciously, the child and the adult associate failure with self guilt. Failure at school, in work, in marriage is admissible only on this basis. The pattern of success exists, waiting to be fulfilled. It is the

ideal and the norm. If the individual fails to make the grade, it is because he is deficient in qualities of virtue.

This sense of guilt distorts the individual's view of reality, makes it difficult to cope with problems, and in the end, inhibits real self reliance.

During the last depression there were millions of unemployed who subconsciously ascribed their unhappy condition to personal failure. Though consciously aware of the world crisis, deep within themselves they felt that being jobless was their own fault. Instead of focusing their attention on the crisis itself, its causes and remedies, they looked within themselves for personality and character deficiencies. They compared themselves with their neighbors, fought vainly to keep up with the Joneses, and finally succumbed to a helpless, inactive despair.

It is the totality of our culture that fosters the delusion of a manifest destiny of personal success and paralyzes the individual as a social being. As a small part of that culture, the western picture, which comprises fifty-four percent of Hollywood's total production, helps to orient the child away from reality toward fictional, fantastic goals of success, power, and love.

However, within the framework of this culture, the western picture has served worthwhile ends. They frequently present good, wholesome values that extend Johnny's awareness and understanding of the world he has to face.

Thus, when an unscrupulous banker connives to foreclose a mortgage on a house or a ranch, it might be concluded that right is more frequently on the side of the poor than on the rich.

It might not be too much to claim that westerns demonstrate that evil often flourishes in high places and that fair, honest government has to be fought for. Crooked sheriffs and mayors are standbys in horse opera.

Another conclusion that Johnny might draw is that the history of our country has been largely a struggle by little people for their rights against great interests. For example, the westward expansion of the homesteaders against the violent resistance of the cattle barons.

Some day, perhaps, we shall be treated to the movie spectacle of a heroic cowboy defying the big ranchers by organizing a cowhands' union. It belongs to the tradition of the western!

A last word to reassure the parents whose children are addicted to cowboy pictures. There need be no fear that Johnny will remain fixed at the western level. A time will come when crude characterization and cliché plots will fail to satisfy him. If other pictures and other art, providing more stimulation and release, are made available to him, he will discover their attractions.

And one day, if nobody tries to jam it down his throat, he will be expounding to Mother Jones the joys and virtues of Shakespeare!



"ADULTS NOT ADMITTED . . ."

NOEL MEADOW AND HARRY L. OBER

AND if you're 'specially good all week, I'll take you to the movies, Mom."

"And," Mom rejoined, "that's no joke, son."

So when that glad day comes, Mom dresses, carefully putting her shoe on the other foot, and gets taken.

For at the Children's Saturday Matinee Club in New York, she has no time-honored status accruing to motherhood. She is made welcome, in a formal sort of way, but that's about all. Her position is that of a guest of a "member." In the theatre lobby, a prim sign reminds her:

"Adults not admitted unless accompanied by a child under 12 years of age." And it means just that.

When the Matinee Club starts its second season early this Fall, it will no longer be trembling on the breathless brink of an experiment. It will step forward with the confidence of an established institution, like Wheaties or mumps.

And, like mumps, it is highly contagious. It is about to break out

NOEL MEADOW, N. Y. writer and film exhibitor, has contributed to **THE SCREEN WRITER** before; he teams here with **HAROLD OBER**, a rewrite man on a New York daily, who also writes English subtitles for imported films.

all over the country. That's because it is one of those enterprises that pop up every so often to Fill A Long-Felt Want.

It was Felt and Wanted by thousands of mothers who were near distraction over the problem of getting their children to suitable movies, or vice-versa. If the Club, in de-emphasizing mothers' importance in its program, has given a few of them the feeling that they have inadvertently spawned a Frankenstein Monster, they are at least agreed that it's the very nicest sort.

Like most good ideas, the Matinee Club was not born at the tail-end of a brainstorm. It was the logical outcome of an orderly pattern of thought. First came awareness of its need, and all thoughtful mothers had that awareness. They knew their children would go to the movies, come what may, and all they could do was pray the pictures would not be too awful. It was the sheerest wishful thinking.

In New York, two neighbors, both mothers, talked about it anxiously: Mrs. Frances Gershweir, wife of a dentist, and Mrs. Beulah Levine, whose husband is general manager of a large chain of movie theatres, but who could offer no solution — at first. As Martin Levine explained patiently to his wife, movies were Big Business, aiming at the broadest, unrestricted markets.

"If we sometimes found a good movie for the children," Mrs. Levine explains, "it usually had an objectionable one playing with it as a double feature. The children just wouldn't leave without seeing both. Many movies were too stimulating for them — in the wrong direction. Afterward, the children were over-excited, had nightmares and were generally hard to handle. As they play-acted, the themes they chose were always murder or exotic love — just as in the movies. It was especially alarming because the lessons the movies taught them seemed completely unrelated to the problems they would face in life."

The two mothers decided that the over-all film market, if carefully sifted, might yield adequate juvenile programs, even if they had to do their own sifting, and then the piecing-together.

Viewing the wares of countless film distributors in New York strengthened their hopeful belief that something might be done. But expert guidance was necessary, they knew, so they consulted with the Schools Motion Picture Advisory Committee, the Child Study Associa-

tion, leaders of parent-teacher groups, school principals and officials of religious agencies interested in child welfare. Soon they had an enthusiastic advisory board to pre-view and okay every program.

At that point, Mr. Levine became an item again. His chain had a de luxe theatre on Broadway, the Beacon, that seemed eminently suitable for the experiment. Centrally situated in the 70's, still on the periphery of the Broadway theatre district, it was just far enough away from the Times Square hub for comfort. Turning over its 2,700 seats to the Club each Saturday until late afternoon did not seem too risky.

After a great deal of attention-calling among mothers — individually and in parent-teacher groups — the first performance of the 15-week season were given of a Saturday. The three showings — at 11:15 a.m., 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. — were timed to permit any child to attend without conflict with the usual Saturday afternoon routine of children — visits to museums or relatives, music lessons, etc.

The kids found nothing to yawn through. Cartoon comics, of which they never got enough, were there in abundance. At least two short subjects dealt with real children, usually not professional actors, at interesting work and fascinating play. The piece de resistance was a stage show, which might take the form of a full-scale puppet-show, a bird-imitator who had previously intrigued them on the radio, wondrous acrobats, a scaled-down circus or other stuff worth gaping at.

Often the program included a feature designed to make the children aware of the world they live in and their responsibilities in it. It was not hard to take, either. Frank Sinatra's *The House I Live In*, clever and potent in its tolerance theme, was enormously popular. During National Brotherhood Week, State Senator L. H. Brown, who represents the district many of the children come from, remained for all three performances to tell them about its significance, in a simple, direct and wholly non-political way that did not provoke the expected uneasy shuffling of feet. He called it an enthralling experience.

As the children enter the theatre lobby, their attention is caught immediately by Happy, a diminutive clown who capers, plays the accordion and juggles. Sometimes, he joins the stage show, too. Happy sees them off on the way out, also. By then, their cup of happiness brims over.

While all this is going on, Mamma has two alternatives: She can

sit in a section reserved for adults, or, if she is the opportunistic type, can chase along downtown for a couple of hours of unencumbered shopping. Mamas, who have brought the children in even from remote points in Connecticut or New Jersey, do both with equal relish.

A city ordinance requires a matron in theatres admitting unaccompanied children, but the Matinee Club provides a dozen, including school teachers and a registered nurse.

The high-speed, blase New York press responded remarkably to the project. The dailies were moved to feature stories, charming photos and even a few glowing editorials. The dollar-minded trade press quickly and excitedly seized on the box-office potentialities and spurred exhibitors all over the city — and many elsewhere — to try special Saturday morning shows for children. Thus far, their talents for imitation have proved less commendable than their intentions.

But theatre operators have not given up hope of duplicating the C.S.M.C. product. From all over the country they have been asking the Mmes. Gershweir and Levine for the precise recipe. The two ladies are trying to get up a sort of instruction manual that will fill the bill.

They feel that if they accomplish little else of lasting value, their work will have been thoroughly worthwhile if they make Hollywood aware that there is a need, as well as a good cash market, for movies designed for children's consumption. Their complaints about the paucity of films suitable for 12-year-olds have been met by the cynical stock reply from the producers:

"After all, the average Hollywood product is kept to the level of the 12- or 13-year-old mentality. So your supply is unlimited."

But the Club sponsors insist that this reasoning omits an x quantity.

"Hollywood forgets," they say, "that the needs of a 10-to-12-year-old normal child are not at all those of the adult with a 10-to-12-year mentality. The adult has been case-hardened by experience, touched by adult cynicism and infected by a degree of prejudice and corruption. They might as well say that any man six feet tall can wear a suit any other six-foot man can wear, without allowing for differences in age, flesh, coloring or other personality traits, let alone individual preference."

In an editorial, the N. Y. Herald-Tribune took the view that the C.S.M.C. may yet exert a ponderous influence on movie-making concepts.

"If the Children's Theatre," the newspaper declared, "demonstrates what is 'box-office' with real 12-year-olds, so that Hollywood cannot fail to get it, and if we then have more features aimed at a '12-year-old mentality,' it will be a big day for pictures."



THE CHILDREN'S FILM LIBRARY

Along the lines of the much-felt need and general concern with films for children, covered in the two preceding articles, the motion picture industry has made available a series of 28 re-issues designed for showing to children at special Saturday matinees. The project, known as The Children's Film Library, has at its disposal 882 prints of the films, processed in August to be ready at the opening of the school year.

It is estimated that the current supply, with the addition of suitable short subjects, should furnish exhibitors with weekly programs until next March.

The ten companies participating in the project, under the leadership of Eric Johnston, include the seven member-companies of the Motion Picture Association, as well as Monogram, Republic and United Artists.

The list of films thus made available is (by studio): Blondie Brings Up Baby, Five Little Peppers and How They Grew, Five Little Peppers in Trouble (Columbia); Young Tom Edison, The Human Comedy, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (M-G-M); The Hoosier Schoolboy, The Barefoot Boy (Monogram); Alice in Wonderland, Little Miss Marker, Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch (Paramount); Two Thoroughbreds, Anne of Green Gables, Anne of Windy Poplars (RKO-Radio); Sis Hopkins, Young Buffalo Bill (Republic); Jane Eyre, The Poor Little Rich Girl, Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm (20th Century-Fox); Three's A Family, Knickerbocker Holiday, Song of the Open Road (United Artists); The Underpup, Sandy Gets Her Man, The Mighty Treve (Universal); Green Pastures, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Prince and the Pauper (Warner Bros.).

National Screen Service has additionally made available a special trailer announcing the Saturday children's shows, and listing the 28 titles.



WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE SINGLE-PICTURE CORPORATION?

ARTHUR A. ARMSTRONG

DURING the past few months the newspapers have been carrying stories of the opening of a campaign by the Commissioner of Internal Revenue to eliminate the tax benefits of the single-picture corporation.

It has been common practice for several individuals interested in producing a picture — among whom may be a screen writer — to form a corporation for the purpose. Frequently the corporation has been dissolved after the picture's completion, but before receipt of substantial returns.

It is fundamental tax law that a dissolving corporation realizes no taxable gain from distribution of its assets to its stockholders; that the stockholders realize a capital gain, taxable at not over 25%, measured as the value of distributed assets minus the original cost of the stock; and that the value of the distributed assets can be recovered by the stockholders, in the form of royalties or sale price, without the payment of any further tax. Consequently, the stockholders of the single-picture corporation have assigned as high a value as possible to the new picture distributed by their disappearing corporate entity, and hopefully paid a 25% tax upon the gain. That rate, they reasoned, was much lower than the ordinary income tax rates which would have applied to a share of profits accruing directly to an individual; and much lower than the corporate income and excess profits rates prevailing during the war, which would have applied if the corporation had received the returns from the picture, and which would have been supplemented eventually by indi-

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vidual income taxes upon dividends or distributions from the corporation.

If the writer-participant in this neat plan received his corporate stock in exchange for a story, script, or writing services, and not for cash, he may have had some difficulty in computing the cost of his stock, on the way to computing his capital gain from the liquidation. There may also have been a question about whether the creation of that cost was accompanied by the creation of a liability for ordinary income tax upon the same amount. To these is added a further difficulty — the Commissioner of Internal Revenue now indicates that he would like to torpedo the entire plan.

The Commissioner's torpedoes may be launched from various directions, but for the present let's consider one marked "Total Disregard of the Corporation." Evidently, one of the Commissioner's arguments will be that the corporation should be wholly ignored, and that the entire profits of the picture should be taxed to the participants as ordinary income. The Commissioner is not merely threatening corporations about to be launched. He is also stalking those already upon the high seas or which seem to have reached a safe harbor. Participants will not be protected until the running out of the statute of limitations against additional assessments for the years in which the picture returns were received.

Of course the whole flurry may end in the compromise of a few cases. But there are indications that the Commissioner wants to establish a principle, and will not be satisfied with compromise. In that event, it is only natural that he will select a favorable case, in which the business effect of the corporation was as superficial as possible, and litigate that case in the courts. If he wins that case, it is likely that he will push a broader application of his theory not only to other single-picture corporations, but also to other business corporations that have been liquidated to the tax-advantage of the stockholders.

The use of a corporation to create values which are realized through liquidation or stock sale was a common business procedure before taxes were an important factor. For many years, the tax statutes, the Treasury's rulings, and the court decisions have recognized the separation between the corporation and its stockholders. The statutes contain specific provisions designed to guard against the abuse of the corporate

device to gain tax advantages. If the formation and liquidation of a single-purpose business corporation are now to be entirely disregarded tax-wise, all of this legislative and judicial structure will have to be ignored.

Congress can properly change the structure for the future by changing the statutes. But if the Commissioner does it in the courts, there are two undesirable results: first, it penalizes taxpayers who, in the past, have relied on the accepted law in arranging their affairs and paying their taxes; second, it leaves no clear-cut definition of the law even for the future. We have had an example of the effect of such judicial legislation in the field of trusts. In a decision known as the Clifford case, the Supreme Court disregarded a family trust and taxed the income to the grantor. There were specific statutory provisions for doing that sort of thing, but none covered the precise facts before the court, so it decided for the Commissioner upon broad principles of the meaning of "income." The facts of the case were extreme — a husband declared himself trustee of securities for a few years, during which his wife was to receive the income, after which the principal was to revert to himself. The Treasury had the sympathy of the court and much of the public in asking that the trust income be taxed to the husband. But the meaning of the decision was so uncertain that thousands of disputes and scores of litigated cases have followed. The doctrine has been greatly amplified, and after six years, its limits are probably more in doubt than ever. There is an old maxim that hard cases make bad law, and it was never truer than in the Clifford case. It could have an even more startling example in the case of the single-picture corporation.

The disregarding of corporations for tax purposes is not new to the courts. It has been done in a good many tax cases, sometimes with resounding talk about dominant tax motives. However, the disregarded corporations almost always have had no real business significance; they have not performed business acts of significance to parties other than the stockholders. Conversely, the courts almost always have refused to disregard corporations of business significance even though they had marked tax advantages.

It is to be hoped that this distinction will be observed in any litigation about the single-picture corporation. Most of those corporations

apparently do have real business significance, along with their tax advantages, and should not be disregarded. If the tax-existence of a corporation is to depend upon the weight of tax advantages and motives as against the weight of its business acts, uncertainty will become the prevailing rule for both past and future.

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ATTENTION: SWG ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

It is believed that a certain number of associate members of the Screen Writers' Guild, particularly among those working in the independent field or outside of the major studios, may qualify for active membership. The Guild office cannot effect such transfers, since it does not have complete employment records on members other than those employed by the majors.

All associate members are urged to have themselves transferred to active membership as soon as they become eligible. Any members who think they so qualify, but are not sure, can have their cases straightened out by communicating with Miss Ruth Roth at the Guild office.

You qualify for ACTIVE membership if, (A) within the last two years you have received, on motion pictures produced in the United States, either one screen credit for writing a screenplay on a feature length picture, or two screen credits for writing an original story, or three screen credits for writing a screenplay or original story on short subjects, or have been employed or engaged during such time as a screen writer in the motion picture industry in the United States for a period of twenty-six weeks, consecutively or non-consecutively; (B) you are now employed in the motion picture industry or have had a screen credit as a writer within the last three months AND you have had experience as a writer in the Service of the United States or in industrial or educational films, within the last year, equivalent to the qualifications listed in (A).

If you have been an active member and were transferred to associate, you need only thirteen weeks employment during a two-year period to qualify you for active membership again.

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SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD, INC.

1655 NO. CHEROKEE AVE., HOLLYWOOD 28, CALIFORNIA
AFFILIATED WITH AUTHORS' LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.

E D I T O R I A L

TEN HUNDRED and sixty-six men and women are eligible to vote for officers and members of the Board at the Screen Writers' Guild's annual meeting on November 13.

There is interest in this year's election. Electioneering is being done openly, in the democratic tradition. The Guild is stronger for that interest and that electioneering. The Screen Writers' Guild will never die of honest controversy. Last year, when three hundred votes elected the representatives of a thousand members, the Guild was suffering from a mild dose of that apathy, which, in virulent form, could kill it. All signs this year point to complete recovery.

The twenty-one persons who are elected on November 13 will guide the Guild for a year. During their term in office, the American Authors' Authority will, through the close cooperation of all the writing guilds, take concrete form. A Basic Agreement between the Screen Writers' Guild and the Artists' Managers' Guild ought to be concluded and put into operation in the next twelve months. The highly controversial issue of the minimum guaranteed annual income will concern the '46-'47 Board.

Pessimistically, the next year may be a period of economic unrest in Hollywood. If our industry is to be beset with strikes, lockouts, work-stoppages, breaches of faith, breaches of the peace for still another year, writers will need intelligent leadership to bring them through that year economically and ethically unscathed.

Optimistically, the coming year will see the establishment of work-

able, permanent arbitration machinery to settle jurisdictional disputes in the motion picture field; cooperation within the ranks of labor; an open-mindedness and the spirit of fairness in labor-management relations. Every craft in the industry is inescapably involved with all other crafts in economic peace and economic war in Hollywood. If a means for the just and final settlement of motion picture labor problems is found, the Screen Writers' Guild, as an interested, yet autonomous organization, should play a vital part in making this sorely needed arbitration machinery work.

The slate which has been placed in nomination is large. Any group of twenty-one from that long list would form a good Guild Board and roster of officers, providing always that the twenty-one were elected by the participation in the voting of a large majority of the members. A Guild Board needs a mandate from the Guild membership. And during their term of office, when these men and women bring their decisions to the membership at meetings, they need the benefit of the advice and the criticism of hundreds of writers. Only a big and an articulate meeting can truly ratify Board actions, create Guild policy, or change it.

Since voting may be done by mail, and ballots reached all members in the United States in ample time for absentees from Hollywood to cast their votes, every one of the thousand and sixty-six active members of the Guild can have a voice in the election of officers and Board members.

We owe, to those who will represent all of us, the assurance that they were voted into office not by a few of us, but by most of us.

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SWG members who have sent in their ballots by mail, or plan to do so, are reminded that the ballot cannot be validated unless the member's name is given by way of identification on the outside envelope. This envelope is removed and destroyed, leaving the ballot sealed within the inner unidentified envelope, and consequently perfectly secret, but the identification must appear on the outer ballot in order that the name of the member voting may be checked off the rolls.

If you have sent in a mail ballot without identification, get in touch with the SWG office immediately, so that an attempt may be made to locate your ballot and make it count.

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REPORT AND COMMENT

NEW ACTIVITIES OF WRITERS

Howard Estabrook

Those who plan for the new era insist that you can't walk backward into the future.

I have discussed the subject of this article with a number of representative writers, past presidents and former board members of the Screen Writers' Guild, as well as with our present board, and I found all of them in agreement with this point of view.

During the years of war, we know that the extracurricular activities of writers as a Guild, that is, those remaining in Hollywood, were channelled into other cooperative organizations working on restricted subject matter related to the conflict. Now that that's all over, we are in a position to proceed to new objectives appropriate to the most important association of professional screen writers in the world.

Some of these objectives are: a more active part in the community, the Hollywood scene and the national field in a constructive way; development of our functions as a professional association of writers balancing the exclusively economic phase; greater unity in diversity; greater opportunity for the full participation of everyone, with general benefit to the industry as a whole; and, above all, the creation of ideas that would serve to make better motion pictures.

These considerations were weighed by our Executive Board when I presented a proposal dealing with advance projects and new activities. Early in 1946, the Board authorized the formation of a council group at present known as the Future Policy Committee and the name serves until a better one is found.

This Committee was organized in June 1946, and so named to distinguish its activities from the already established policies of the Guild in the field of employer-employee relations and similar economic matters.

HOWARD ESTABROOK, 2nd Vice-President of SWG, is a screen writer and director of long standing, with a distinguished list of famous screenplays to his credit.

The Future Policy Committee deals with the professional and cultural activities of screen writers as a group. The membership of this central Committee, which is being augmented, now consists of: Howard Estabrook, chairman (pro tem.), Claude Binyon, Hugo Butler, Ken Englund, Melvin Frank, Sheridan Gibney, Frances Goodrich, Albert Hackett, Alexander Knox, Milton Krims, Harry Kurnitz, John Larkin, Jesse Lasky, Jr., Richard Maibaum, Norman Panama, Stanley Rubin.

Among those who have already offered their cooperation in the activities of the Committee are Helen Deutsch, James Hilton, Michael Kanin, Garson Kanin, Dudley Nichols, Edward Parmore Jr., Ernest Pascal, Samson Raphaelson, Jo Swerling.

The projects to be sponsored by this Committee will be of a character that should enlist the united interest of the Guild and the entire industry. Some of the projects are indicated by the purposes of the sub-committees already formed.

Monthly Program: Alexander Knox, chairman, Frances Goodrich, Albert Hackett, Ken Englund, Harry Kurnitz, Allan Scott. A series of evenings will be arranged devoted entirely to professional and cultural subjects, with the general objective of making better pictures.

In August, an invitation was accepted by Dr. George Gallup, through his West Coast representative, Jack Sayers, the date to coincide with Dr. Gallup's next visit to Los Angeles, when he will describe for our gathering the methods by which his Audience Research Institute evaluates story material in preparation and production, as well as on pictures after release. An invitation to introduce Dr. Gallup has been accepted by N. Peter Rathvon, President of R.K.O., whose company was the first motion picture organization to use the Audience Research Institute. It is expected that questions from writers, directors and others interested will assist in clarifying the points discussed. A summary will appear later in *The Screen Writer*.

Another evening would center around

the international aspects of motion pictures, now of vital importance with the reopening of foreign markets and the broadening of our thought-horizons. For one such evening in the future, we may have as our invited guest Louis Verneuil, the noted French playwright now resident here, the date to coincide with the visit here of his distinguished fellow-writers Jules Romains, Marcel Pagnol who is Chairman of the French Authors' Society, and Marcel Achard. All of them speak English fluently and their authoritative continental points of view, plus questions, should provide an evening of intense interest.

Another and perhaps earlier event is planned with several of our industry's leading foreign or international representatives, including Jack Cutting of Walt Disney Studios, William Gordon of Universal-International, Luigi Luraschi of Paramount, Robert Vogel of M.G.M. Mr. Cutting and Mr. Luraschi have just returned from extended travel abroad and all of these gentlemen are in a position to contribute from their long experience in dealing with problems of writing and production related to the international scene, and to deal with basic principles which if considered might improve our pictures for the domestic field as well as the international. A summary of both these discussions will also appear in The Screen Writer.

Other evenings are planned with guests of honor who have achieved eminence outside of motion pictures, and whose points of view would be of interest to all of us. Alexander Knox, Chairman of this Committee, will inform you of these future plans.

Short Plays: Milton Krims, chairman, William Kozlenko, Paul Green, S. K. Lauren. Plans for the presentation of evenings of short plays written by Guild members have been outlined in an article by Milton Krims in the September issue of The Screen Writer, with a further note in the October issue. The project includes annual publication of the plays and an annual award for the best play. While each play would stand on its own merits,

it is not impossible that some short plays might prove to be the basis of longer plays or screen stories, and might in some instances provide acting characterizations which would bear fruit later. Advance outlines of proposed plays will be welcomed by the Committee from all Guild members, from the newest to the leading established writers.

Annual Entertainment: Melvin Frank and Norman Panama, co-chairmen, Edmund Beloin, Allen Boretz, Edward Eliscu, Ken Englund, Everett Freeman, Don Hartman, Roland Kibbee, Lester Lee, Frank Loesser, Henry Myers, William Morrow, Mortimer Offner, Jack Rose, Arthur Schwartz, Melville Shavelson.

A yearly event is planned with informal sketches and entertainment, touching on current trends, pictures and personalities, somewhat along the lines of the National Press Club's annual affair. You will hear more of this event from this Committee.

Library: Hugo Butler, chairman, Helen Deutsch. A library of screenplays is planned, including scripts which have been nominated for or have won Academy Awards, and other notable screenplays. Specimen bindings are being considered. Such a library would be invaluable to all writers.

Other sub-committees will include: Radio, Honorary Memberships, Publications, Special Events, etc.

It is anticipated that directors, actors and others may join with us in many of these programs, not only as spectators but participants.

Although not the primary objective, it is possible that some of the activities planned would reveal unsuspected professional talents or new phases of talents.

At present, the industry has only one consistently planned and projected activity, the once-a-year standardized Academy Awards.

With the wealth of professional talent in varied forms of expression, your Committee feels that truly representative events should reflect Hollywood to ad-

vantage not only nationally but internationally as well, and to this end all those interested are invited to cooperate.

THE FIRST DAYS

Ronald MacDougall

This is a narrative report of the present labor situation as it has affected the writers at Warner Brothers.

There are thirty-four guild members at Warner Brothers, of whom four are, or were, on lay-off at the beginning of the strike.

On Wednesday afternoon last, Finlay McDermid, story editor of Warners, called me as Chairman and told me that the trouble appeared very certain to begin the following morning. He asked me if the Guild had formulated a policy, and I summarized for him the temporary directive sent to all Guild members by the Council, instructing us that we were not obliged to cross picket lines if it entailed exposing ourselves to physical danger or personal indignity. McDermid then informed me that this was in line with the Company policy of Warner Brothers towards its writers, and that in the event of the presence of massed picket lines we were to work at home. I asked him to give this information to the individual writers on the lot, and as far as I am aware, he did so.

Parenthetically, it is interesting to note that this represented a reversal of the company policy. At the time of the previous trouble, the writers then at Warners were definitely expected to cross the lines no matter what the situation, or the methods necessary. At that time McDermid bluntly stated in behalf of the management that quote — the writers' work is inside — unquote, and that writing at home was not considered writing by the management. This stand was partially

withdrawn later that day upon application by Edwin Gilbert and myself, when, at the behest of our fellow Guild members we entered the studio. We asked McDermid, and Steve Trilling, executive assistant to J. L. Warner, what if anything the Company action would be if the writers chose to consider the lines dangerous and accordingly stayed out of the studio. The warning was promptly withdrawn. This time, interestingly enough, the Company seemed ready to consider writing at home, writing.

On Thursday morning, when it definitely was apparent that the picket lines were of a potentially dangerous nature, the Warner writers held a sidewalk meeting, and with no dissenting votes, decided to stay out of the studio. This decision was sent in to McDermid, the writers were asked to keep in touch with their producers, and with no objection from the Company we went home. Two men out of thirty chose to regard the situation as normal, and entered the studio where presumably, they worked all day. Neither of these men had consulted their chairman, or their Guild, and neither had attended our emergency meeting. Both of them, in passing the picket lines, exposed themselves to what appeared to be considerable personal indignity, but as far as is known, suffered no immediate physical violence. Later that day, a Warner Brothers producer, on what apparently was his own initiative, attempted to use the presence of these two men within the studio, as pressure to get others of his writers into the studio. He was without success. Also, later in the day, one writer was ordered to come into the studio and work on the set. He refused.

On Friday morning, the same picket line situation existed as on the previous day. Therefore, no meeting was held and the writers individually either went or stayed home, with the two exceptions already noted. Also, that morning, McDermid informed us that we were not expected to come to the studio at all the following morning.

At three o'clock Friday afternoon,

RONALD MacDOUGALL, the well-known screen and radio writer who is SWG Studio Chairman at Warner Bros., presented this report to the membership meeting of Oct. 1, in an attempt to clarify the position of writers at that studio. Hence the speech form, which has not been altered.

however, McDermid called me at home and said that at twelve noon the Company had applied an injunction received the previous day. The pickets had dispersed, and there was every reason to believe that the lines would be of an orderly nature the following morning, Saturday, and that under these circumstances the Company would like us all to come in; even those writers who did not generally come in on Saturdays. I asked him to convey this information to the writers individually, and tell them to contact their chairman if there was any question.

The following morning, Saturday, no resistance of any kind being offered by the nominal picket lines, all writers who normally work on Saturday, and a few who do not, entered the studio, leaving it at the noon hour. At twelve-thirty, before leaving myself, I checked with McDermid about the Monday situation. I was asked by Steve Trilling, in the presence of McDermid, and two other gentlemen, one of whom was an attorney, what the probable attitude of the writers would be on Monday. I replied that I could not speak for the individual writers, but that the Guild had expressed itself as abiding by the terms of its contract with the producers, and that the writers were expected by the Guild to enter the studios unless there was reason to fear physical danger or personal indignity. Mr. Trilling then said informally, that he hoped the writers would come in, since the studio henceforth intended to follow a quote — no work, no pay policy — unquote. I asked, if, by inference, I was to regard this as a statement that the company considered writers only as writers when at their studio desks. Mr. Trilling, the attorney, and McDermid promptly assured me that I had mistaken the meaning. So ended Saturday.

Monday morning, having had private intimations that considerable trouble was to be expected at Warners and another studio, I was in front of the main gate shortly after six a.m., and stayed there until nine. Although several hundred men were present across the street from the

main gate, only eight pickets were on the line. No trouble took place, and by nine o'clock most of the men had gone elsewhere.

At nine-thirty, as the writers arrived, those who considered the small picket line harmless went through immediately. Those of us who had our doubts, consulted with the captain of the picket line, who indicated that his pickets intended us no harm or indignity. As individuals we therefore went through. Today, Tuesday, the same situation obtained.

These are the facts of the labor situation as they apply to the writers at Warner Brothers. As to the labor situation itself, and with no attempt at discussing it on its merits, there are additional things for every writer in the Guild to consider, as we Warner writers have had to do.

Warner Brothers studio is an armed camp. The private police force within the gates has been tremendously augmented. In the words of a producer — "there are more cops than pickets." In addition, and as you know, the regularly constituted police forces of both the city of Burbank, and Los Angeles, are very much in evidence, all of them armed, helmeted, and equipped with riot clubs. Portable barricades were constructed on the back lot. (These were "hot" barricades, I'm sure.) Large numbers of mattresses and beds, have been installed in several of the dressing room buildings. The key personnel of the studio are sleeping in. The ordinary workmen enter the studios in fleets of armed, and guarded buses. Stars are escorted to and from the studios by body guards. Significant preparations have been made for what is evidently an expected state of siege.

Meals are served by emergency kitchen workers, and on an emergency basis. The ordinary plumbing facilities of the studio are left untended. By no stretch of even the kindest imagination can the situation inside the studio be regarded as normal, or even healthy. Outside the gates, as you know by reading your daily newspapers, there have been a number of dangerous incidents. Every day pickets nar-

rowly escape being run down by cars and buses charging into the studio, and I imagine others have witnessed much the same thing, at other studios. There have been numerous fights of one kind or another, and during one fracas, a number of shots were fired. It is evidently not impossible that this will occur again.

As Lot Chairman and as an individual I have attempted to be guided by the Guild directive. I have found it insufficient. I cannot undertake to personally judge the day-to-day danger of the labor situation at the studios . . . or the possible mathematical chances of not being hit on the head at one moment, as opposed to the next. In my opinion, and I believe it to be shared by nearly every Warner writer, the situation is **constantly** dangerous. And evidently, from the list of activities I have outlined to you, the studio itself agrees with me. Under the circumstances, as Lot Chairman, I must respectfully ask the Guild as a whole to take full responsibility for what has happened, what is happening, and what may possibly happen, to its member writers at Warner Brothers.

IT HAPPENED IN HOLLYWOOD

Martin Field

It was still dark when we got there at five-thirty that Monday morning. Three spotlights above the open studio gate were trained on the men and women marching back and forth on the sidewalk. We observers stood across the street on an open parking lot.

The picket captain, his eyes red-rimmed with lack of sleep, came over to us and said, "You'll notice this is very peaceable. We're going to keep it that way. But it's not all up to us."

He nodded toward the line of cops standing in the middle of the street,

arrogant in sharp-visored caps, trim uniforms and leather puttees. And clubs and guns. One very important dress item for cops was missing, though. No badges. No identifying number that observers could record in case of trouble.

There was no sunrise, just a lightening of the sky until, economically, the three spotlights on top of the walls were shut off. Newspaper photographers with PRESS ribbons floating out from their breast pockets darted about like mischievous kids on a holiday. Counting pickets, deputies, photographers and bystanders, there were at least five hundred people there. Most of them would still be peacefully asleep if not for this.

Perhaps it was a try at scaring the spectators and observers, but a man walked up and down in front of us and shot us in 16 mm. Most of us underwent this "screen test" with dignity, carrying on our watch as impassively as before, but some of us couldn't resist either sticking our tongues out or putting thumb to nose and wiggling the other fingers derisively. Call it the comedy relief, there's no other defense for such unrefined behavior. One girl among us made the best answer of all. She whirled a 16 mm camera right back, now and then tossing her long, straight, sun-streaked brown hair away from her eyes.

A voice began to boom over loudspeakers from within the gates. The voice said that the people walking up and down on the sidewalk could no longer do so. If they did not disappear in a few minutes, they would be subject, under the majesty of the law as applied in this State, to arrest. The voice went on while the people walked. In the center of the line stood a tall Viking of a girl wearing a helmet. Her brassard was inscribed: **FIRST AID**.

Behind the picket line, inside the gate entrance, stood the studio executive in charge of production, big-bodied, expensively-dressed, his face aglow with Palm Springs weekend tan, playing the role of boss. As the voice finished its recital of the injunction against the marching people, he lit a cigarette. It was a show of

MARTIN FIELD, a frequent contributor to **THE SCREEN WRITER**, acted as a volunteer observer at the scene of the picketlines during the current Hollywood labor dispute. His report is presented as an up-to-the-minute account of the situation, in which SWG interest was so sharply evidenced at the Oct. 21 membership meeting.

nonchalance belied by the exaggerated long-drawn-out puffs he took. Beside us a striker said to a friend, "I remember him when he first came here. Just a kid. Now look at him." Another person said, "I've heard that guy talk for three straight hours on the brotherhood of man. He was for it. Would you believe it?" As if the executive had heard, he dropped the cigarette and stepped on it.

The silence that followed the reading of the injunction was broken by the sound of motors. Four police wagons, the size of large buses, rolled up the street and came to a stop. Then it began.

Very quietly, a few at a time, people were taken out of the picket line. The men and women offered no resistance. They entered the police wagons, the "pie wagons," the "black Marias," except that they were gray-painted. The first police bus was full. As the driver stepped on the starter, a picket inside the wagon called out to the crowd standing across the street: "Fill the line." The others inside the wagon took up his cry. "Fill the line." And the line itself burst into song: America.

The wagon rolled away. The second wagon was filled. Some one called out: "They got First Aid." Yes, there she was, standing tall and straight between two cops and much calmer than they were. A photographer took a picture of Miss Liberty enchained and she entered the wagon. Flashbulbs littered the street.

The second wagon started to roll away. A man inside the wagon called out: "Hey, John. Call my wife. Break it to her gently." The crowd laughed. The wagon rolled away.

By the time the third and fourth buses were filled and had left the scene, the first two were back for more cargo. When they had left, fully loaded, the line in front of the gate was down to the injunction limit of eight pickets.

Once more the loudspeakers vibrated to the voice within the gates. The voice said that all observers and spectators standing across the street on the parking lot could no longer do so. They must leave the vicinity. "This is a public

parking lot," one observer said. "How far can they go?" Some one else said, "As far as they can get away with. If you checked, you might find that the studio owns the parking lot, too."

The voice on the loudspeakers finished its warning. The people on the parking lot began to drift away. The company executive walked inside to his office.

We observers stayed long enough to take names and addresses of witnesses. The picket captain came over to us and said: "We were picketing peaceably. There was no violence. Our people got arrested. You'll report that, won't you?"

We herewith report it.

WRITERS IN CHINA

C. P. Wan &
S. Y. Shu

Throughout the war, Chinese writers have adhered steadfastly to only one purpose: to fight for a unified and democratic China. To attain this end, we have had to face many untoward circumstances with unwavering conviction. The common people and love for them have inspired the Chinese writers to work to the marrow for a new social order which all may join but none can destroy.

Amid unprecedented hardship and privation, we had endeavored to mobilize the people into a united front to fight with tears and blood for victory. In the course of events some of us were killed at the front, some died of destitution and some are lingering on in hunger and cold. Yet the work has to go on. We feel warm in heart, seeing the Axis enemy in the Far East has eventually fallen to the dust.

The present state of things in China has led us to believe that our work is

C. P. WAN (whose Chinese pen-name is Tsao-Yu) is a leading Chinese playwright, currently a guest of the U. S. government along with S. Y. SHU (who is in reality Lau Shaw in a slightly different transliteration of his name). A report of first Hollywood reactions to their appeal on behalf of Chinese writers was carried in an earlier issue of THE SCREEN WRITER; future issues will list later developments along this line.

only half-way done. Our journey is still long and hard. For the realization of a unified and democratic China, the Chinese people and their writers must make a united effort to mobilize public opinion again, this time for peace and for cooperative rehabilitation of the country by the presently warring factions.

With this purpose in mind, we are confronted with numerous problems, of which the most urgent and calamitous is that the ranks of the Chinese writers are being fast decimated by malnutrition and even the lack of basic subsistence.

The inflation in China began to run wild in 1939. For the last seven years, the Chinese writers, crushed by the high cost of living, have been taken one by one prisoners of ill health. Paper was, and still is, extremely scarce. Printing machines could no longer be imported. With the sharp reduction of publishing business, our writers struggled to be able to write gratis by selling intermittently their meager personal belongings. Today they are faring in no better condition.

During 1940-1943 air-raids over Chinese cities were so devastating that writing became impossible. Due to the housing shortage immediately following the air-raids, a family of 5 to 8 had to squeeze into a single room, leaving no space even for a desk. Although the war is now over, rooms and apartments are still only available to those who can afford to pay bars of solid gold.

Malaria was rife in China's Southwest where most of the Chinese writers came to stay during the war, and many became infected. With malaria infection came anemia and anemia led to the fatal T.B. A great many Chinese writers gave up writing with tears in their eyes and with only a remote hope of ever rising in a totally helpless condition from the sick beds.

The Chinese Writers' Association, nation-wide in its membership, had campaigned in 1943 for voluntary contributions from the people for the relief of the sick and the most needy among its members. The fund thus collected was far from being sufficient to help all of

them. At the worst point of this war, when the city of Kuei Lin fell to the enemy, the Association sent 1,160,000 Chinese dollars out of the fund to various stations both inside and outside the war zone. More than fifty writers were rescued due to the timely help. Otherwise they would have perished of starvation in their attempt to escape to safety. However, owing to the terrific acceleration of inflation after the war, the scanty remnant of the fund, in trust with the Board of Directors of the Association, is reduced to almost nothing in worth.

The facts we state, however, are by no means indicative that we are disheartened or will give up the fight for the purpose we have pinned our faith on. The Chinese writers have indeed suffered with their people in body and soul as few other groups of writers in the war. But we refuse to be daunted by misfortunes and hardships, since our life and joy is to write, and to write for the people. And our people have ever encouraged us by being wonderfully responsive. Now the demobilizing warriors are ready to join the people for another struggle. Now is the time that we have to render what assistance we can to those who still preserve enough spirit and courage to continue their work, yet are disabled by malnutrition and ill-health.

We who write this have witnessed the long ordeals that our writers have endured, as we have stayed with them in the interior of China for the entire period of the war.

We wish to express our deepest gratitude for your kind interest in the fate of our Chinese writers, and for asking us, during our brief sojourn in Hollywood, for detailed information about the present living conditions of the writers in China in order to render the most effective assistance. On behalf of the Chinese writers, we thus appeal to you for moral support and if possible for material help. We would be very glad to accept either or both as the most friendly expressions from the fellow-writers of America and as personal gifts from those who are in a position to give.



S . W . G . B U L L E T I N

UNEMPLOYMENT CHECKS

Unemployment compensation checks were refused members of the Screen Writers' Guild by the Hollywood office of the Department of Employment on Oct. 3 and 4, with the explanation that checks were being given "only to actors." Upon investigation, Guild representatives were told that certain studios had informed the Department that the Guild was involved in the strike. The Guild office immediately sent a certified statement to the Hollywood office pointing out that the Guild was not involved in the trade dispute, and Morris Cohn, Guild counsel, so advised the Department's office in Sacramento. On Oct. 7, Department officials in Sacramento ruled that the Screen Writers' Guild was not involved in the dispute and ordered the local office to pay benefits due writers.

Approximately 25 Guild members have called the office objecting to a "Trade Dispute Questionnaire" which the Department of Employment asks applicants for unemployment compensation to fill out. The particular question to which members objected is: "Will you cross picket lines to accept or seek work in the motion picture industry?" One member was denied compensation because he refused to answer the questionnaire. The Executive Board instructed the Guild counsel to protest the use of such questions by the Department. As a result of the Guild's protest, the Trades Dispute Section of the Department of Employment investigated the case of the member whose compensation had been denied, and, although he continued to refuse to answer the questionnaire, the Department paid him the checks due. Further, we have been advised that the legality of the questionnaire is being considered by the Sacramento office of the Department.

RELATIONS WITH ENGLAND

Following publication in *The Screen Writer* for July of a letter from SWG member John Paxton in England, discussing SWG relations with the trade-union and professional organizations of that

country, the following letter, dated Sept. 9, was received from Frank Launder, Hon. Secretary of The Screenwriters' Association:

My attention has been drawn to a report in "THE SCREENWRITER" under the heading "RELATIONS WITH ENGLAND" concerning certain negotiations by your member John Paxton with the Association of Cine-Technicians here.

I have been asked by my committee to point out to you that the Association of Cine-Technicians does not represent British Screenwriters. Some years back the A.C.T. attempted to bring screenwriters into their Union and formed a section for that purpose in opposition to the wishes of this Association. They met with very little success. The members of the Screenwriters' Association as a whole resisted the move and today the A.C.T. represents perhaps some forty writers at the outside. Most of these are writers in the documentary field and a number of others are in the A.C.T. because of their activities in other directions, for example writer-directors. The membership of the Screenwriters' Association is over two hundred and embraces practically one hundred per cent of the feature screenwriters in this country. These facts, I think, speak for themselves. The proper course for your member, John Paxton, to have taken would have been to contact this Association.

Our policy has always been to welcome to this country all good screenwriters of whatever nationality. This has been clearly stated on a number of associations and has the general approval of our members. Moreover, we have always informed the Ministry of Labour of this whenever negotiations have been conducted through us for working permits for foreign writers.

I wish you would make it quite clear, either by circular to your members or by publication in "THE SCREENWRITER," that the Screenwriters' Association, which is affiliated to the Incorporated Society of Authors and League of British Dramatists, is the only organization in Britain empowered by writers themselves to rep-

resent the interests of screenwriters in this country.

Shortly thereafter, another letter, dated Sept. 27, was received from Mr. Launder. It reads:

This is to inform you that at an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Screenwriters Association here held on the 25th September last to vote on the referendum as to whether the Association should be incorporated as a section of the Trade Union representing Cine-Technicians or whether it should remain as an independent organization, it was decided by a very large majority that the Association should remain independent and as at present constituted.

Since this Association now represents one hundred and eighty full members, embracing practically one hundred per cent of the screenwriters in this country, and one hundred and fifty associate members, this should dispose of any lingering doubts as to which body represents screenwriters over here.

I enclose a copy of the referendum, contents of which may interest you.

The copy of the referendum is on file at the Guild office, for any SWG member who may be interested in seeing it.

RELATIONS WITH FRANCE

A further exchange of letters has taken place between Eric Johnston and Emmet Lavery, concerning the Blum-Byrnes agreement as it affects the showing of U. S. films in France. On Sept. 23, Johnston replied to Lavery's letter (published in *The Screen Writer* for September), mainly basing his rejoinder on the alleged collaborationist activities of Henri Jeanson, one of the dozen French professional and trade-union leaders cited by Lavery.

Lavery answered on Oct. 1, with a letter pointing out that the respective patriotism of Messrs. Blum and Jeanson had nothing to do with the terms of the French-American agreement, that moreover Jeanson had been sufficiently cleared by the Resistance authorities of his country to resume the highly "sensitive" post

of president of the Screen Writers' Union (whereas all real collaborationists, whether imprisoned or not, have been barred from such fields of French public life), and that Johnston harped on one man's record, selected from among a dozen, most of whom are Resistance heroes, who associated themselves with Jeanson in this protest.

Lavery renewed his invitation to Johnston to discuss this and other matters of mutual interest at a membership meeting of the Screen Writers' Guild, pointing out that Johnston had left the basic criticisms of the Blum-Byrnes agreement largely unanswered. Eric Johnston, on Oct. 14, replied:

Johnston to Lavery

"Thank you very much for your letter of October 1 discussing the Blum-Byrnes film accord. Of course I would like to sit down and discuss this matter with you.

"I have considerable work of an urgent nature both here (in Washington) and in New York which will keep me occupied for some time, so that the date of my next visit to Hollywood is indefinite. Also I plan to make a quick trip to Europe to dispose of some pressing industry matters there.

"However, when I do get to Hollywood, I will be pleased to discuss with you industry problems of mutual interest."

Other Developments

This closes the debate on the Blum-Byrnes film agreement, in connection with which the French government has attempted to take such protective measures as are allowed it under the agreement, only to be met with American claims that they violate "the spirit of the accord."

The press of this country — the independent press, that is, — has shown itself deeply understanding of the situation into which the French motion picture industry has been put. In France, *L'écran français* devoted a lead editorial to praising Emmet Lavery and the SWG for the courageous stand taken. And SWG relations with the screen writers and the industry of France

as a whole have been cemented as a result on a wholesome and thoroughly promising basis.

SUIT FOR LIBEL

On Aug. 15 last, The Hollywood Reporter, under the signature of W. R. Wilkerson, published a column which purported to give the record of achievement of Harold J. Salemsen, Director of Publications for SWG. On Aug. 29, the firm of Bodle and Mosk, attorneys for Salemsen, served on The Reporter a demand for a retraction, couched in the following terms, which Wilkerson had only to sign, if he were interested in publishing the true facts:

On Thursday, August 15th, we printed what purported to be the record of Harold J. Salemsen, Director of Publications for the Screen Writers' Guild. The major portion of the statements printed were false and untrue, and the following facts are intended to correct these misstatements and make up for any embarrassment or occupational prejudice caused to Mr. Salemsen.

We questioned Mr. Salemsen's interest in the French-American Film Agreement, and that he was representing the viewpoint of the French film writers in this case. We recognize that as a journalist, who worked for years in France and who for the past fifteen years has been the leading correspondent for French publications in Hollywood, Mr. Salemsen's interest in this agreement is normal and justified and that, moreover, it came in answer to a direct appeal from the president of the French Screen Writers' Union, as printed in the July issue of the Screen Writer.

We stated that Salemsen was formerly head of the local Newspaper Guild. This is false.

We quoted the testimony of Rena M. Vale before the Tenney Committee in 1942, to the effect that she had met Salemsen within the Communist Party.

Rena M. Vale's testimony was denied any validity whatsoever years ago by Governor Culbert L. Olsen and was considered untrustworthy by the Dies Committee. Her testimony concerning Salemsen is false and unfounded; her only contact with him was within the Newspaper Guild, and her testimony concerning his membership in the Communist Party is a lie.

We stated that Salemsen also wrote articles for the Hollywood Tribune, a publication of the League of American Writers. The Hollywood Tribune was an independent publication put out by E. A. Dupont, who had formerly been a director in Germany of such memorable films as "Variety." It had no connection with the League of American Writers.

We stated that in June, 1941, Salemsen was listed as a speaker of the Fourth Congress of Writers held in New York. This was incorrect.

We stated that "as far back as 1936 Salemsen was a correspondent for the French Communist paper, Ce Soir." Salemsen was never at any time a correspondent for this paper, nor was he ever correspondent for any Communist paper. From 1931 on (as the records of the Hays office press credentials list testify), he was Hollywood correspondent for the biggest evening newspaper in Paris, the arch-conservative L'Intransigeant, and its weekly fan magazine, Pour Vous, and its weekly sports magazine, Match. When this group was bought out by Paris-Soir, which had in the interim become the biggest evening paper in Paris, Salemsen was transferred from L'Intransigeant to Paris-Soir, and from January 1, 1938, until the fall of France was its Hollywood Bureau manager, representing Paris-Soir and its four other publications, the daily Paris-Midi, Pour Vous, Match, which had been transformed into a French counterpart of Life, and Marie-Claire. Paris-Soir was a highly conservative and even reactionary evening paper. Its editor, Pierre Lazareff, came to the United States, where he was head of the French section of OWI in New York during the war, and has now returned to Paris as editor and publisher of France-

Soir, successor to Paris-Soir, of which Salemsen is Hollywood correspondent in addition to his work on The Screen Writer. During the 1931 to 1940 period Salemsen was concurrently also Hollywood correspondent, for brief periods, for the London Daily Express, for the Laborite London Daily Herald, for Opera Mundi Press Service, a worldwide syndicate operating out of Paris in conjunction with Hearst's King Features, and sundry other French, Belgian, British, and American publications without any specific political implications.

We further stated that Salemsen was West Coast representative of another Communist-dominated publication, Friday. Friday was published by one Dan Gillmor, heir to the Sperry Gyroscope fortune, who is the son and nephew of admirals in the United States Navy. During the same period, Salemsen was also correspondent for the Sydney, Australia, Sunday Telegraph and did freelance picture story coverage for clients including Life, Look, Picture Post in London, the Los Angeles Times, the Los Angeles Daily News, PM, Federated Press, Minicam, and countless other publications.

We stated that "Salemsen, being native born and of draft age, enlisted in the army shortly after Pearl Harbor and maneuvered himself into the editorship of an army publication up in Seattle." We apologize to Mr. Salemsen, who had an outstanding war record, for any implication in this statement which might tend to reflect on his patriotism or honor, or to minimize his brilliant contribution to the winning of the war; and we give herewith a complete statement of his war record, so that nothing may remain of the implication that he did not serve in an exceptionally outstanding manner. Salemsen, although classified 3-A by his draft board, enlisted on December 11, 1941, four days after Pearl Harbor, was inducted on December 14th, went through Ft. McArthur and had basic field artillery training at Camp Roberts, after which he spent a year in the 40th Field Artillery, becoming a Staff Sergeant in the position of Battalion Operations Ser-

geant (direct aide to the Colonel commanding the Battalion), the highest position an enlisted man can hold in the Field Artillery. At the end of February, 1943, he was transferred to an OSS outfit, which was later renamed the First Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company, with which he went overseas in May of 1943, serving on detached service thereafter with the Psychological Warfare Branch, Allied Force Headquarters, first from June through November of 1943 as head of the printing operation in Tunis, which created over one hundred and twenty-five million combat leaflets for the successful campaigns in Pantelleria, Sicily, and Italy through the armistice with that country; then from November, 1943, to April, 1944, as head of French radio broadcasting on United Nations radio in Tunis (the highest-powered medium-wave station in the world) — where he was the only broadcaster okayed to go on the air without submitting his scripts to censorship; then from April, 1944, through September, 1944, as editor-in-chief of the French Leaflet Section of the Psychological Warfare Branch, A.F.H.Q., first in Algiers, then in Naples — serving, though only an enlisted man, as chairman of the Committee of Senior Officers and Ranking Civilians on Propaganda to Southern France, prior to and during the invasion, and writing all the leaflets used in the preparation and execution of this invasion, including General Maitland Wilson's Proclamation to the People of France. For this work he was recommended for the Legion of Merit by Brigadier-General MacChrystal.

During this period Mr. Salemsen also served as acting assistant policy chief on the Tunis radio, and was entrusted with top secret information, writing the August 15th invasion leaflets as early as May 28th, and having previously been in sole charge of the Tunis end of security on the propaganda for the Pantelleria bombardment, the Sicily invasion, the Italian armistice, and a black propaganda operation known as the Italo Balbo Group.

On September 30, 1944, he was re-

turned to the United States as the result of a letter from his commanding officer, which stated that his work corresponded to that normally expected of a man with at least a Major's rank, if not higher. It was intended to put him in charge of all coordinated leaflet operations in the Pacific theatre. After spending two months at OWI in New York, he was returned to the Army when this project of coordinated Pacific propaganda was abandoned, and thereafter spent a month at Camp Beale as a casual. Following this, Mr. Salemsen was transferred to Ft. Worden outside of Seattle, Washington, in March of 1945, as Information and Education non-commissioned officer, where he was assistant editor of a mimeographed fortnightly sheet known as *The Salvo*, most of which he wrote and which he personally ran on the mimeograph machine (circulation 1400). It is hardly necessary to point out that this is not the kind of spot into which anyone would "maneuver himself." Thereafter Salemsen was transferred to Camp Lee, Virginia, and very shortly from there to Ft. Benning, Georgia, where he was in charge of radio in the Post Public Relations office (a fact which should have been in our files, since we received an official Army press release to this effect), doing as many as 14 shows a week over the two local radio stations (CBS and ABC) from V-E Day until his honorable discharge on October 4, 1945.

Mr. Salemsen's outstanding service is attested by Henry F. Pringle in an article entitled "The 'Boloney Barrage' Pays Off" which appeared in the Saturday Evening Post on March 31, 1945. In discussing the propaganda campaign carried on by the Allied Force Headquarters, Mr. Pringle says, "An outstanding pioneer in charge of leaflet production until after the liberation of France was T/Sgt. Harold Salemsen, a tall, dark-haired soldier who, in peacetime, had been a Hollywood correspondent for French newspapers. . . For the invasion of Southern France, a French leaflet section was created in Algiers, Oscar Dystel, of OWI, a magazine editor, became its chief. Dystel had never

been abroad and spoke no foreign language. He had no experience in psychological warfare. But he could talk to the brass hats. He could work with temperamental writers and translators. With T/Sgt. Salemsen as his editor, he was to publish pamphlets in six languages as well as daily newspapers in French and German."

These leaflets, for the editorial content of which Salemsen was entirely and almost solely responsible, had the following effect, as described by Leo J. Margolin, news editor for OWI, in his book, "Paper Bullets," published recently:

"For weeks before the invasion of Southern France (Operation: Anvil) on August 15, 1944, Allied Air Forces literally swept the beaches clean of most enemy opposition with leaflets and special newspapers, notably the *Landser Post*, addressed to German troops guarding the coastal defenses. The material was written in German, Russian, Polish, Czech and in a few other Slavic languages because the French underground, which maintained the closest contact with Allied Force Headquarters, reported that the Germans had manned the defenses with impressed troops of all nationalities.

"When the first waves of troops hit the Riviera more than 2,000 of these impressed troops, wearing German uniforms, surrendered to our forces. The payoff was calculated this way: how many American and French soldiers did NOT die because 2,000 fewer of the enemy were behind coastal guns, or rifles, or machine guns?

"Summing up the phenomenal success of 'paper bullets' in the southern France landings, the propaganda chief of Anvil, a 45-year-old Manhattan newspaperman assigned by OWI to PWB, reported:

"'We went from D-Day to D-plus-70 in three days!'"

Finally we said, "He has never had a screen credit but, even failing in that, is quite an important person in the Screen Writers' Guild. . . ." We regret any implication in this statement that his lack

of screen credit disqualifies him for the position he now holds, or that he at any time attempted to gain screen credit and failed to get it. It is our understanding that Salemsen has never been a screen writer and has never sought screen writing credits, all of which has no relevance whatever to his qualifications for the position he holds with the Screen Writers' Guild. The book recently published by the Princeton University Press, under the title of "The Little Magazine," cites the magazine *Tambour*, which Salemsen, then aged 18-19, published in Paris in 1928-30, as having made significant contributions to the important writing of those years, and as having had a very high critical level and exceptional selection of materials. It quotes an editorial by Salemsen as the most significant summing up of the writing of the 20's and forerunner of American literary work as it was to develop in the 30's. Since this time, he has had a consistent record of literary and journalistic accomplishments which highly qualify him for the position he now holds, and has remained con-

sistently prominent in French-American relations, both in the literary sphere and in that of motion picture journalism. We hereby withdraw any implication or innuendo reflecting upon his qualifications or justification for taking the stand he has in connection with the French-American Film Agreement, however our own views on the subject may differ from his.

No retraction was published and, after receipt of the above copy, Wilkerson continued to imply in *The Reporter* that he had received no answers from individuals attacked, including Salemsen.

Consequently, giving Wilkerson much more than the legal time required to publish the retraction, Salemsen on Oct. 21 filed a libel suit against Wilkerson and *The Hollywood Reporter*, in the sum of \$1,000,545, on three counts, involving his military record, his professional reputation and the newspapers which he has represented as a correspondent.

★ ★ ★

A . A . A . P R E S S S U R V E Y

We continue this month the running excerpts of the nation's press on the American Authors' Authority:

Milton Luban — *Hollywood Press-Times*, Aug. 2, 1946:

NEWSPAPERS ATTACK AUTHORS' COPYRIGHT PLAN

Our liberty-loving newspapers . . . are having a field day denouncing the American Authors' Authority . . . as communistic, fascistic, and inspired by Stalin and Hitler. . . .

. . . Right here is why every magazine will fight the Authority. Magazines make a great deal of profit from digest reprints, because the digest fees go to the publication, not the writer. The motion picture studios will fight it because some

of their swollen profits will now go to the writer, upon whom the entire industry depends. So, advertising being what it is, and newspapers being what they are, you may expect a terrific barrage of distortions and propaganda against the proposed authority. But don't be deceived by the big-money interests fighting against a square deal for the writer. The Authority is nothing but a simple plan to protect the writer.

Archer Winsten — *N. Y. Post*, Aug. 10, 1946:

Word that the Screen Writers Guild . . . accepted almost unanimously a proposal for the setting up of an American Authors' Authority probably marks the beginning of a long battle and a long

overdue change in the status of writers and the marketing of their works.

Briefly, the reasons (for this battle) have to do with the classic rooking given authors by the magazines, the publishers, the radio, the picture companies and the government, state and national. . .

To some writers the prospect of yet another organization will not be personally pleasing, they being rugged individualism's last ragged stand. But it is hard to believe that they will fail to recognize the utter inability of the individual writer to cope with the powerful corporations that make the AAA a necessity.

The New Republic, Aug. 19, 1946:

The American Authors' Authority plan has exploded like a Bikini bomb in the stagnant lagoon of literary marketing methods. . .

Among the many writers of Hollywood who gave it birth, this AAA plan is being greeted as the forerunner of a new golden age. . . As for the idea that the plan is communistic, that is nonsense. It is essentially capitalist. It is concerned with property rights and their protection.

. . . This will put America's 18,000 screen, radio, stage, book and magazine writers organized in these four guilds squarely behind a plan that has important implications and that seems certain to meet bitter, organized opposition. . . It may be modified considerably, but the writers seem pretty militant, and determined that this Triple A shall not be plowed under.

David Hanna — Hollywood Film Bulletin, Aug. 19, 1946:

As might be expected, no film city clash would be complete without the red herring being brought into the picture. So there are those who insist that Uncle Joe personally commissioned Cain to deliver his ultimatum to the movie moguls. It is part of the plot that we hear a great deal about, but can find no evidence to support, namely: that the screen writers want to infiltrate Communist propaganda in all motion pictures.

The legal ramifications of the plan are

being scrutinized and in that section of the trade press controlled by producers, such phrases as "unconstitutional, monopolistic, restraint of trade, etc." are being trotted out by the opposition.

In other words, the studios which for so long have flaunted their own power and defied all the rules of fair trade now cry out that they are being persecuted — that they will fight to the Supreme Court — that they will not buy even so much as a comma from the writers' combine if it is put into practice. They insist they will use material from their story vaults.

This is so much malarkey, for the screen is too vital a medium to entrust its future to the dramatic compositions of last year, or the year before. The writers know this. The strength of their cause rests on the film's ever-present need for freshness and timeliness. To envision the American picture industry trying to operate without selectivity of writers and material is to imagine automobiles being manufactured without carburetors.

Before the producers yell anarchy, they ought to survey the reasonable complaints of the writers. Had they the foresight to do this years ago and act on them, they might not now be confronted with anything so formidable as the Cain plan.

Frank C. Waldrop — Washington Times-Herald, Aug. 15, 1946:

. . . These people are setting up to control popular thought in America. If they succeed, and they very well may, that thought will go Red, for make no mistake about it, these propagandists know how to lead the unwary just where they want him to go. . .

Don't expect the movie moguls or the radio, book and magazine magnates to be much help. Most of them have long since given up the struggle to control their own editorial voices and are just operating straight selling outfits.

Milton Luban —

Hollywood Press-Times, Aug. 20, 1946:

. . . The Hollywood Reporter twisted itself into a foolish-looking knot when its crusading publisher — always crusad-

ing when it serves his pocket — in the same column headed "A Vote for Joe Stalin" went on to assail the AAA as fascistic. The reader was supposed to believe that Stalin took time off from defending Russia from the Nazi onslaught to cook up the Authority plan with Hitler.

This just about sums up the intellectual level of the arguments against the AAA.

. Knowing that the real blasts against the AAA are yet to come and that they will be filled with falsehoods, let me state once again that the American Authors' Authority is simply a plan by which the author retains ownership of his property, leasing it rather than selling it outright. All of the rules to be set up by the AAA are for the purpose of achieving this. Behind the plan there is no fiendish plot to overthrow the government or establish a literary czar or even inject a little honesty into our newspapers. There is only the simple intent to see that the writer gets a decent financial return for his work. Remember that when you start reading of Reds, Fascists or three-eyed monsters from Mars taking over the Screen Writers' Guild.

Variety (N. Y.), Aug. 21, 1946:

ENTIRE RWG ACCEPTS AAA IDEA

A membership meeting of the midwestern region of the Radio Writers Guild last week accepted in principle the Cain American Authors Authority plan, giving the AAA idea a powerful hypo. . .

Significant here was the fact that the midwest RWG council had nixed the AAA issue, but passed it on to the membership which reversed its own council's position.

Roscoe Drummond — Christian Science Monitor, Aug. 21, 1946:

What would you think of the idea of a literary holding company — which could ultimately have the power of economic life and death over every magazine and book publisher in the country?

. . . An organization of such possibilities is no fanciful dream; it already is in the making. It is being formed in Holly-

wood at the initiative of the Screen Writers' Guild, and is in the process of being presented to the Authors' Guild, the Dramatists' Guild, and the Radio Writers' Guild.

The way it looks from here, a chain of events has been set in motion which inevitably will lead to Washington. Such a tight, all-encompassing literary cartel will certainly raise the eyebrows of the Anti-trust Division of the Justice Department, and Congress, at the last session, passed legislation denying to James Caesar Petrillo lesser powers of dictatorship than the writers' union appears to have in mind.

Frank C. Waldrop — Washington Times-Herald, Aug. 22, 1946:

LITTLE RED WRITERS?

. . . Out in Hollywood, there is a very rich, but nutty outfit going by the name of the Screen Writers' Guild.

The membership of this organization make up the main percentage of the movie writing men and women.

Like others of the Hollywood aristocracy, the big shots of the SWG make a lot of money. A \$500-a-week-writer is looked on as very low down in their set and only a few jumps ahead of the wolf. . .

So now see what's happened. Only July 29, the Screen Writers' Guild voted by an overwhelming majority to fall in with the principle of an outfit called the American Authors' Authority.

This AAA has as its avowed purpose the control of everything that goes into magazines, books, movies and on the radio in the U.S.A. Crazy? Overdrawn? Well, you just don't know them. . .

John O'Connor — Florida Catholic (St. Augustine), Aug. 23, 1946:

. . . Only July 28th, the Executive Board of the Screen Writers' Guild unanimously endorsed a program known as "The American Authors Authority," which will give one man and a small committee of men the totalitarian power to control all copyrights in literary material submitted to magazines, play producers, publishing houses, motion picture

studios, and broadcasting stations throughout the United States! (Go back and read that again—if you're an American and still think you're in the U.S.A.) . . . The implications throw the shadow of the Kremlin and the ghost of Goebbels across the typewriters and manuscripts of America.

Frank C. Waldrop — Washington Times-Herald, Aug. 24, 1946:

Another purge is on in Russia, just as full of meaning and importance as those of 1935-39 in which Stalin had millions shot on suspicion of differing with him on how he should rule.

The class of people being purged are the Russian writers, artists and intelligentsia. . . They know well the old truth about not caring who makes the nation's laws if you can only write its songs. . .

. . . To get a comparison, you would have to imagine that the American Authors' Authority, now being organized out in Hollywood had actually put all the writers of America together in one organization, as planned, and Representative Vito Marcantonio of Harlem had the New York local of their outfit on the carpet.

. . . It is as if Mr. Emmett Lavery, boss of the Screen Writers' Guild out in Hollywood, had been found guilty of letting his membership think for themselves, and Ernest Hemingway, Russel Crouse, Archibald MacLeish, Katherine Winsor, Faith Baldwin and Edgar Guest had been declared unfit to print because their thought had strayed from the official program of culture.

George Sokolsky — Hearst Syndicate, Aug. 28, 1946:

. . . In a word, what Caesar Petrillo has done to music, Cain would do to thought and its expression. But the difference lies in this: Civilization might survive a strike of saxophone players, but could civilization survive if Mr. Cain refused to permit a writer to be published because he personally disagreed with the ideas and their expression? Even the Government of the United States is pro-

hibited from doing just that by the Constitution. . .

Minneapolis Star-Herald, Aug. 29, 1946:

We never thought the day would come when there would be a "closed shop" on thought. But such a possibility might become reality if the left wingers in the Screen Writers' Guild get their way.

It's a known fact that an alarming percentage of those who write for the theatre, the movies, the radio and the magazines are followers of the Communist Party line. If a "closed shop" became a reality it isn't hard to imagine how tainted with propaganda would be what we read, see and hear.

Hollywood Press-Times, Aug. 30, 1946:

**WILKERSON RIDES A
WILD RED HERRING**

. . . Most of the writers this reporter talked to felt that Billy's red smear on the SWG is for the purpose of disrupting the Guild — for two reasons: (1) If the Guild can be torn with internal dissension at this time the writers will not have enough strength to set up their American Authors' Authority; and (2) it fits into the long range objective of the producers to destroy the strong, militant, progressive unions in the picture industry, such as the Actors' and Writers' Guilds, the CSU and some elements of the IATSE which have fought the dictatorship of Walsh and Brewer.

Jonathan Stout — The New Leader (N. Y.), Aug. 31, 1946:

Attorney General Tom Clark has been asked to look into the activities of the Screen Writers' Guild in Hollywood. . .

The occasion for the Attorney General's interest in the Screen Writers' Guild is a plan adopted by a vote of 430 to 8 a month ago to create a monopoly which would give the Communist-controlled Screen Writers Guild a complete throttle-hold on propaganda material for the American screen, radio, magazine and book publishing fields.

Lee Shippey — Los Angeles Times, Sept. 7, 1946:

One of the things the local group is

urging is that the rights to their work shall be leased rather than sold outright, and shall revert to the authors after a certain period. . . .

. . . . it almost makes me weep to learn how many creators of masterpieces half starved on the crumbs which fell from their masters' tables.

Today . . . many magazines still send authors piddling little checks for stories they accept, and when those checks are signed the author has signed away "all rights" instead of "first American serial rights only"

. . . Many a story for which the author got only \$50 has later been sold for a motion picture for thousands. I myself once sold a novelette to a company which published half a dozen magazines. I was paid for it only once, but the buyers published it four or five times, each time under a different title and in a different magazine, the appearances being two or three years apart. . .

**John Chapman — N. Y. News,
Sept. 9, 1946:**

. . . The most interesting hotbed of literary controversy is, of all places, Hollywood, where the Screen Writers' Guild has launched a program whereby any writer—playwrights and novelists, as well as the authors of film stuff—may no longer have to sell his work. He will rent it instead, and always remain in control of his property.

The charge of Communism has again been flung at the Screen Writers' Guild.

One result was a long reply by Emmet Lavery, president of the Guild. Fifteen writers, he said, had been attacked as Reds, whereas all the writers in the Guild total 1,440.

Lavery denied that he, himself, is a Communist or intends to become one. . . . In a letter to me he reports that the State Department is pushing production of his play of last season, "The Magnificent Yankee" in Austria and Germany as a sample of what the democratic idea can be.

**Walter Trohan — Chicago Tribune,
Sept. 9, 1946:**

AUTHORS OPPOSE SCHEME OF REDS TO RULE WRITING

Writers and dramatists are mobilizing here to battle what is regarded as a sly communist scheme to control the printed and spoken word as a medium of forming opinion.

**George Dixon — Hearst Syndicate,
Sept. 10, 1946:**

Being a fellow in the writing business I simply cannot understand the yen of so many writers to communize and regiment their racket.

Writing, like horseshoe pitching, is essentially competitive.

. . . Breast-beaters may argue that we live in insecurity and fear. But I do not recall that it was a terrifying existence. I never knew any top-notch reporter to be out of work for more than two weeks, unless he was a tosspot who could not be trusted on any assignment where he had to pass a saloon.

. . . The thing that prompts this essay is the current battle with the Screen Writers' Guild. So far as I have been able to make out the big controversy is over demands designed to protect the misfits in the business.

I could understand it if only the incompetents were doing the agitating. But some of the best writers in the racket are lending their assistance. . .

**Editorial — Chicago Tribune,
Sept. 12, 1946:**

Side by side in THE TRIBUNE the other day were two significant news stories. One was a report that a number of American writers are organizing to fight a scheme launched in Hollywood by James M. Cain and other presumed Communists to establish an "American Authors' Authority." The other was a dispatch from Moscow announcing that the Union of Soviet Writers had purged three authors from its ranks because their writings did not militantly advance "the aggressive ideology of communism."

Mr. Cain's plan to organize an Ameri-

can version of the Soviet writers' union was indorsed by more than 400 members of the Screen Writers' Guild, which may be considered an index to the warmth accorded Red totalitarian ideas in Hollywood. . . .

. . . After getting the plan approved by the Screen Writers, Mr. Cain turned to the Radio Writers' Guild, which also indorsed the project. . . .

. . . No American in his right mind can reach any other judgment than that Cain and his supporters intend their organization to lead a similar regimentation of American thought in the interest of Communism. . . .

N. Y. Times, Sept. 13, 1946:

Fifty prominent writers . . . within the week have formed the American Writers' Association to combat what the group charges is an attempt to establish a monopoly control over all literary material in the country . . .

The Association . . . declared in a statement that a plan to control literary work is being advanced through a self-styled "American Authors Authority," a group organized last July by Hollywood screen writers and others. . . .

N. Y. Journal-American, Sept. 13, 1946:

WRITERS FORMING
ANTI-RED GROUP

N. Y. Sun, Sept. 13, 1946:

WRITERS FORM
A RIVAL GROUP

Hollywood Citizen-News, Sept. 13, 1946:

'NONSENSE,'
CAIN REPLY TO
N. Y. WRITERS

James M. Cain, author, labeled as "pure nonsense" today charges of New York writers that the American Authors' Authority, which he heads, is trying to establish monopoly control of literary production.

"The articles of incorporation (of the AAA) which are already drawn up take elaborate and effective means to prohibit such a monopoly as the organization in New York seems to fear," Cain declared.

As for the allegations that the Authority is "inspired by communists," Cain described his own communistic tendencies as 'absolutely nil.'

Chicago Tribune, Sept. 14, 1946:

50 AUTHORS JOIN
TO FIGHT 'PLOT'
OF COMMUNISTS

Fifty prominent authors today announced organization of the American Writers Association under which they plan to enlist all writers of national reputation to fight what they consider a plot of Communists and fellow travelers to bring all creative writing under rigid dictatorship.

The writers include . . . Borden Chase, John Lee Mahin, Casey Robinson, Howard Emmett Rogers, Fred Niblo, jr., Ayn Rand, James Kevin McGuinness. . . .

N. Y. Sun, Sept. 14, 1946:

WRITERS HEAD
FOR NEW CLASH
Rice Decries Red Basis for
Sales Plan Attack

The battle lines are drawn today and next Wednesday has been set as the date for the firing of the third shot in the duel between two opposing schools of thought in the literary world. . . .

Dramatist Elmer Rice, president of the Authors League which represents 7000 writers, fired the second shot here yesterday when he declared that the newly-formed American Writers Association was seeing red ghosts when it alleged that the literary marketing plan was Communist inspired.

. . . Rice told reporters the only question to be decided was whether the plan proposed by Cain would give authors greater financial protection and benefits and not whether the Screen Writers Guild, which has approved it, is Communist-dominated. . . .

Editorial — N. Y. Herald Tribune, Sept. 14, 1946:

A rather startling shadow has emerged from Hollywood to cloud the American literary horizon. To correct the disabili-

ties under which writers labor in marketing their product, it has been suggested that an American Authors Authority be set up which would deal, in the authors' behalf with publishers and producers. It would unify the efforts of four major writing organizations — . . . it would, in effect, set up a closed shop in the production of literature in the United States.

. . . No one, who has watched the Communist party here or in Russia, go to work on heretical writers can view with any complacency the prospect of Communist thought control acting through such a streamlined device as the authority.

N. Y. Herald Tribune, Sept. 14, 1946:
JAMES M. CAIN DEFENDS HIS PLAN
TO CREATE AN AUTHORS AUTHORITY

From coast to coast, writers in all fields were drawing the battle lines for their biggest fight in years over the Cain plan. This would create an American Authors Authority which would acquire all writers' copyrights for the authors' benefit, and would protect his rights in court and legislative halls. The opponents charge that it would set up a five-man dictatorship and a monopoly over the country's instruments of opinion.

. . . Speaking to the N. Y. Herald-Tribune by telephone from Hollywood, Mr. Cain denied the charge that there was Communist inspiration behind the plan, or that it would constrict in any way the free expression of opinion by the nation's authors. He said that support of the plan among the organized screen writers and radio writers was overwhelming, and he predicted that by Jan. 1 the two major guilds of writers in the East would be brought over to the plan.

. . . As to freedom of expression, he said the Authority would receive any property from an author without regard to content and would undertake no judgment of its content; nor would it bar a writer because of nationality. It does not serve as agent for writers and therefore would not control the writers' market, he said.

N. Y. Times, Sept. 14, 1946:

'AUTHORITY' PLAN
DEFENDED BY RICE
Head of Authors League Denies
Charges of Monopoly and of
Communist Inspiration

Thornton Delehanty — N. Y. Herald Tribune, Sept. 15, 1946:

It is impossible to be in and of Hollywood and remain unaware of the fermentation. One particular phase of it has been symptomatized recently in a series of editorials in one of the industry trade papers, charging that the Screen Writers' Guild is a Communist-led organization and implying that its president, Emmet Lavery, was either a willing or unwitting dupe of these influences.

Accordingly, we invited Mr. Lavery to luncheon and asked him to say his say.

. . . . "This attack in 'The Reporter' is simply a rehash of a dead issue. It looks to me like a cover-up for something else."

"A red herring?" we asked.

"Possibly so," Lavery replied. "What frightens the producers, and maybe through them the editor of 'The Hollywood Reporter' is not the Red menace but the growing power of the screen writers."

. . . . "It (the plan) means greater protection for writers . . . against producer practices which Cain and the rest of us consider astringent and unfair. Naturally, the producers don't want to give up certain advantages which they hold over writers. . . ."

" . . . Far from trying to freeze out writers, we would want to bring them in. All of them, if possible, for the more we have the more effective our power will be. And that power is to be exercised solely for the benefit of the writers."

" . . . There is no intent in the AAA plan to steer writing ideas. In other words, the possibility of group control would be as unlikely as it is in the Dramatists Guild. Can you imagine that body attempting to tell a playwright how he is to express himself politically? No. The material control would rest solely with the author. . . ."

N. Y. Times, Sept. 16, 1946:

**FARRELL OPPOSES
WRITER AUTHORITY**

The proposed American Authors Authority, which would serve as a copyright repository and act as clearing house and agent for authors in the "leasing" rather than the sale of their writings, was condemned yesterday by James T. Farrell, novelist.

In a letter to Elmer Rice, president of the Authors League, he urged its thirty-six council members to reject the plan as "reactionary and bureaucratic."

Newsweek, Sept. 16, 1946:

A plan by the Screen Writers' Guild to sew up most of the literary market in an American Authors Authority will be fought down the line by a united front of movie producers, radio executives and fiction publishers.

... Freedom-of-the-press and anti-monopoly objections to the AAA scheme will be raised by the three industries, which fear the SWG would wield a dangerous ideological propaganda club over United States writers. At the same time there will be gestures toward raising authors' royalties, easing economic pressures behind the Hollywood labor plan.

N. Y. Sun, Sept. 17, 1946:

Certain prominent American authors are up in arms over the proposal that their brain children be taken out of parental custody and placed in an institution. That, at least, is how some of them view the plan of James M. Cain, to create a writers' authority. . . . That the plan has been hailed most enthusiastically by authors with leftist leanings may be due to the fact that it so closely parallels the system of literary control now employed in Russia. . . .

... This is not the first time that a proposal similar to this has been advanced. On a narrower stage it is like the Bureau of Fine Arts, contemplated in a bill introduced in 1938 by Senator Pepper and Representative Coffee and defeated when men . . . rallied to oppose it.

N. Y. Sun, Sept. 17, 1946:

RED TINT SEEN IN ART AUTHORITY

Plan to Regulate Writers Follows Communist Pattern, Says Lieut.-Col. Joseph.

The proposal to create an American art authority which would take over the works of authors for them . . . has much in common with the plan to create a permanent bureau of fine arts, which was defeated in 1938.

One of the engineers of that defeat, Lieut. Col. Henry Joseph . . . is much impressed with the similarity of the two proposals.

N. Y. Times, Sept. 18, 1946:

**AUTHORS TO DISCUSS
'AUTHORITY' PLAN**

New Writers' Group Picks Rene Kuhn to Oppose Project at Meeting Here Today

... Late last night telegrams were still being exchanged and conferences held to determine whether Miss Kuhn would attend the meeting.

... In a letter to Mr. Rice, Miss Kuhn said yesterday he was under a misapprehension in his assertion that (the American Writers Association) had "raised the red issue." The association, she said, merely took cognizance of the fact "that the proposal for an AAA was brought into the open by the Screen Writers' Guild which has a public reputation for being completely Communist dominated." . . .

Variety (N.Y.), Sept. 18, 1946:

**CAIN'S PROPOSAL LIGHTS
FUSE FOR AUTHORS
LEAGUE'S FACTION BLOWUP**

After 34 years of cautiously avoiding political issues, the Authors' League of America suddenly found itself the center of a bitter factional struggle last week as right and left wings went to work on each other over the issue of James M. Cain's proposed Authors Authority. . .

N. Y. Herald Tribune, Sept. 19, 1946:

**CAIN PLAN FOES
FAIL TO SHOW UP
IN WRITERS' ROW
Council of Authors League
Hears Report, Passes it on
to Committee for Study**

N. Y. Times, Sept. 19, 1946:
AUTHORS TO STUDY
'AUTHORITY' PLAN

Los Angeles Daily News, Sept. 19, 1946:
LEAGUE BACKS
FILM WRITERS

Screen writers, who propose to coordinate all writing interests under an American Authors Authority, were backed by the Authors League of America at a New York meeting yesterday.

With Elmer Rice . . . presiding, the league formed a committee of heads of the four writing guilds in its membership to study plans for AAA.

Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch,
Sept. 19, 1946:
SOVIETIZED LITERATURE

Whether or not literature in the United States is to be Sovietized and authors rigidly regimented by an "art authority" after the pattern which keeps Russian creative writing in a government-controlled strait-jacket seems clearly to be the issue in the current head-on clash between two groups of American writers.

. . . It is . . . pointed out that the proposal bears a striking resemblance to one presented to Congress in 1938 by Senator Pepper and Representative Coffee and seeking to establish a permanent federal "bureau of fine arts."

Lincoln (Neb.) State Journal,
Sept. 19, 1946:

PINK PENMEN

From the Pacific coast comes a proposal, bearing the earmark of communism and loaded with menace for the essential American Freedoms

. . . . What they envisage is a Petrillo riding herd on American authors.

Jamestown, N.Y., Post-Journal,
Sept. 20, 1946:

A WRITERS' CLOSED SHOP

. . . . Mr. Cain, if not a Communist, is at least a fellow-traveler. The Screen Writers Guild has Communists in its leadership, and other Communist periodicals are supporting the plan. Its Communist inspiration is undoubted. Its effect—such a situation . . . as was demonstrated

fection would bring about precisely by the expulsion by a Communist local in Connecticut of Ruth McKinney and her husband, Bruce Minton, for not writing as the party line requires.

. . . It is but little more than a year since the late Joseph Goebbels was denounced by all Americans for establishing precisely such a system as Mr. Cain and the other Soviet transmission lines now propose. The closed shop is un-American in any case; a closed shop in literature would be intolerable and deadening to intellectual effort and honesty.

Dorothy Thompson — Syndicated,
Sept. 20, 1946:
AUTHORS' AUTHORITY PLAN
HELD THREAT TO U. S.

The boldest and most unconscionable danger to the sources of public opinion in the United States lies in a plan already accepted by the Screen Writers' Guild of Hollywood.

. . . . It holds the possibility of just such suppression of freedom of thought as was inflicted by Dr. Goebbels on Hitler Germany, and has always existed in the Soviet Union. It emanates from the stronghold of Communism and Communist sympathy among writers and artists in the United States

. . . Technically, it is much closer to the Goebbels method of thought control than to the Communist

. . . How did Goebbels establish thought control in Germany? By the Fascist variety of syndicalism to which this proposal belongs.

. . . This proposal should be compared with the attempts of the Communist party in France to win control over public opinion through similar means, with the fight going on in the American Communist party to exercise political control over even the non-political writings of their own members.

Covina (Calif.) Argus-Citizen,
Sept. 20, 1946:

Look for a blast out of Hollywood, aimed at George Dixon, columnist, who has taken on the Screen Writers' Guild in rugged manner. Mr. Dixon is wholly

out of sympathy with unions of the writing craft in any form — Newspaper Guild or otherwise.

Daily Variety, Oct. 4, 1946:

WRITERS DO
CAIN PLAN
REDRAFT

American Authors Authority as proposed by James M. Cain is being re-drafted by a special sub-committee of the Screen Writers' Guild, it was learned last night.

Principal aim of the rewrite job is to allay fears of some members of the SWG that politics will enter into operations of the AAA, and to dispel public objections.

. . . It will be made plain in the rewritten provisions . . . that no closed shop will be placed into effect to keep new writing talent outside the pale.

First section of the rewritten manifesto now declares that "no discrimination whatsoever will be made against any written material by virtue of its political content."

★ ★ ★

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

AMERICAN AUTHORS' AUTHORITY

Letters continue to pour in concerning the AAA. Taylor Caldwell, author of *This Side of Innocence*, *Dynasty of Death*, and other ranking novels, writes:

I have carefully read Mr. James M. Cain's article, AN AMERICAN AUTHORS' AUTHORITY, with great interest and enthusiasm, and am all for the program outlined. Please keep me informed on the subject, and how things are progressing. I want to join such an organization.

I heard, while in New York just recently, considerable about this matter. There were many ivory-tower idealists who believed that an author should be content to starve in his two-room, cold-water walk-up, while serving "art," while those who exploited him rolled in the fat of his endeavors. I even heard that the AUTHORITY was Communist-inspired! Everything, now, is "Communist-inspired." If a man tries to protest against his exploitation, whether he is an artist or a laborer, he is a "tool of Moscow." I notice those who so designate him eat at the Stork Club and at Club 21, regularly, and toss around \$10 bills at random.

While lunching at Club 21 last Thursday, with my movie agent and an officer

of the movie company who bought my last book, *THIS SIDE OF INNOCENCE*, it came to me, upon looking around the room, that every so-and-so there, with his big cigars and his hand-painted ties, was totally dependent upon the writer for his livelihood, his Cadillacs, and his blondes. I saw dozens of agents, actors and movie people, not to mention a publisher or two, and it gave me a dreary satisfaction to contemplate the fact that without us they'd be scrubbing floors or pouring out drinks at the Nedick counters. Yet we get only a minute part of what comes to them gratuitously, out of our sweat and our typewriters.

I agree with Mr. Cain that we need protection. By the way, there was some hint in New York that such an AUTHORITY would decide, arbitrarily, whether any book should be published or not, and that this would form a "dictatorship." I shouldn't like to be under such a dictatorship, as I prefer to write what I please. Could you clear up this matter for me?

P.S. Mr. Cain's remarks about the tax-gatherers touched me keenly. Though I will probably get about \$500,000 as proceeds from my last book, I'll be lucky to keep \$75,000.

★ ★ ★

NEWS NOTES

★ Current programs in the N. Y. Museum of Modern Art's History of the Motion Picture are: Von Stroheim & Realism (II): Foolish Wives, Nov. 8-10; Travel & Anthropology (I): In Seville, Nanook of the North, Nov. 11-14; The Western Film (I): Wild Bill Hickok (1923), Nov. 15-17; The Western Film (II): The Great Train Robbery, The Last Card, The Covered Wagon, Nov. 18-21; American Film Comedy (VI): Grandma's Boy, Sherlock Jr., Nov. 22-24; Von Stroheim & Realism (III): Greed, Nov. 25-28; American Film Comedy (VII): Dream of a Rarebit Fiend, High and Dizzy, The Navigator, Nov. 29-Dec. 1; Films of Douglas Fairbanks (II): The Thief of Bagdad, Dec. 2-5.

★ This month's bills at the American Contemporary Gallery in Hollywood are: Nov. 7-8, Metropolis; Nov. 14-15, early Lumière-Brother films, and René Clair's first, The Crazy Ray; Nov. 21-22, Ménépantomant, Ballet mécanique, and Entr'acte.

A NOTE TO RECENT & NEW SUBSCRIBERS

There are still a few issues of The Screen Writer available as far back as November 1945. Recent subscribers interested in having a file of these back copies can receive them by advising The Screen Writer office that they would like to change the effective date of their subscription to the "earliest available" issue. Those copies which they have not previously received will be mailed them and their subscriptions will be redated to expire one year from the earliest issue so mailed.

New subscribers may still date their subscriptions to begin with the "earliest available" issue, the Nov. 1945 issue, or any issue since then. The first five issues, June-Oct. 1945, are out of print.

★ Current at the Pasadena Playhouse is George Seaton's But Not Goodbye. Run ends the 10th of this month. It is followed by Vina Delmar's The Rich Full Life.

★ Actors' Lab is keeping Gogol's The Inspector General on its stage for an indefinite run.

★ Altadena's Community Theatre announces a \$100.00 award for a play (three acts, not previously produced by professionals) to be given a tryout under terms of the Frederick Warde Prize. Manuscripts and requests for information should be addressed to Mrs. Weldon Heald, Pres., 3126 Rubio Canyon Rd., Altadena, Calif. (with return postage enclosed). The theatre is devoted exclusively to the American Scene, and all entries must come within that category.

★ SWG member Angna Enters' drama, Love Possessed Juana, was presented by the Houston, Tex., Little Theatre, as its opening attraction of the season, beginning Oct. 15. The play, previously published in book form, had its world première on this occasion.

★ Los Angeles Public Library will hold a Fiesta of Books in conjunction with Book Week, Nov. 12-15, consisting of programs and exhibits honoring some of the many nationalities who make their homes in Los Angeles. Grand March and Folk Dances, led by Ray Shaw, Tues., Nov. 12, 7 P. M.; California authors Robert G. Cleland, Doris Gates, Ed Ainsworth, Wed., 8 P. M.; Marian Manners, Thurs., 8 P. M.; Gabriela Mistral, Honorary Chilean Consul in L. A. and Nobel Prize Winner for Literature 1946, and Paul E. Hadley, Fri., 8 P. M.

★ President Emmet Lavery's The First Legion is one of the first productions since liberation by a young theatre group in Vienna, in addition to The Magnificent Yankee to be sponsored there by the U. S. Army in the spring.

★ SWG members Frederick Kohner and Albert Mannheimer had a play, entitled The Bees and the Flowers, on Broadway last month. After two weeks at

the Cort and two more at the Booth, it was suspended for want of a house. If another house cannot be found on Broadway, the play is to go on the road. Irrespective of the merits of the play, it was noteworthy that reviewers harped on the fact that the show had been sold for films in advance of Broadway production. That, apparently, does not sit well in New York.

★ SWG member Louis Pollock has a short story titled *Breakdown* coming out in an early issue of *Collier's*.

★ Peter Packer's novel *White Crocus* will be published by Whittlesey House in the spring.

★ SWG member and frequent Screen Writer contributor Lewis Herman has two books due to appear this month: *Manuel of American Dialects* (Ziff-Davis) and *New Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Marcel Rodd).

★ Harris Gable, of this magazine's Editorial Committee, in addition to his commercial-film work, has taken on the managing editorship of *Writers' Markets & Methods*.

★ Richard G. Hubler's *The Hughes Method*, published in *The Screen Writer*

SWG members are urged to bring to the attention of *The Screen Writer* production of their plays, publication of their novels and stories, or other non-motion picture literary activities, for listing in these News Notes.

for June, is translated (with luscious Jane Russell illustrations) in No. 21 of *Kino*, the official Czech motion picture magazine in Prague. Jiri Pik did the translating—which appears faithful in form at least, pending having someone who can understand the words.

★ Lewis Jacobs' *The Rise of the American Film* will appear this winter in a French translation, to be brought out by Jacques Mélot in Paris.

★ Upcoming in the series of PEC lectures on Great American Novels and Novelists, at Screen Cartoonists' Hall, Tuesdays at 8:30 P. M., are Arnold Manoff on *The Jews in the Contemporary Novel*, Nov. 12; John Sanford on *The Treatment of the Negro People in American Literature*, Nov. 26; and Vera Caspary on *Women in the Novel and Popular Forms of Writing*, Dec. 3.

AN AMERICAN AUTHORS' AUTHORITY

by

JAMES M. CAIN

Now Available in Reprint — 20 Pages
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Individual copies of *THE SCREEN WRITER* for July, containing this article, can no longer be furnished except in conjunction with subscriptions beginning in June, 1946, or before.

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A LISTING OF SCREEN WRITERS' CREDITS
EARNED ON FEATURE PRODUCTIONS
OF CURRENT AND RECENT RELEASE

CREDITS

AUGUST 21, 1946 TO OCTOBER 15, 1946

A

GERALD D. ADAMS

Joint Original Story (with Sidney Biddell)
DEAD RECKONING, COL

FRANKLYN ADREON

Joint Original Screenplay (with Basil Dickey,
Jesse Duffy and Sol Shor) JESSE JAMES
RIDES AGAIN, REP

ART ARTHUR

Joint Original Screenplay (with Richard
English and Curtis Kenyon) THE FABULOUS
DORSEYS, (Embassy Prods.) UA

B

JEANNE BARTLETT

Sole Screenplay and Joint Adaptation (with
Martin Berkeley) GALLANT BESS, MGM

MARTIN BERKELEY

Joint Adaptation (with Jeanne Bartlett)
GALLANT BESS, MGM

SIDNEY BIDDELL

Joint Original Story (with Gerald D. Adams)
DEAD RECKONING, COL

MALCOLM STUART BOYLAN

Additional Dialogue BOSTON BLACKIE AND
THE LAW, COL
Additional Dialogue ALIAS MR. TWILIGHT,
COL

HOUSTON BRANCH

Story Basis THE BIG HAIRCUT, PAR

IRVING BRECHER

Joint Adaptation (with Jean Holloway)
SUMMER HOLIDAY, MGM

MONTY BRICE

*Contributor to Special Sequences MY FA-
VORITE BRUNETTE, PAR

*Academy Bulletin only.

GEORGE BRUCE

Joint Screenplay (with Seton I. Miller) TWO
YEARS BEFORE THE MAST, PAR

VAL BURTON

*Contributor to Treatment TWO YEARS
BEFORE THE MAST, PAR

FRANK BUTLER

Joint Screenplay (with Abraham Polonsky
and Helen Deutsch) GOLDEN EARRINGS,
PAR

C

EUGENE CONRAD

Joint Screenplay (with Francis Swann and
I. A. L. Diamond) LOVE AND LEARN, WB

IRVING CUMMINGS, JR.

Sole Original Screenplay DEADLINE FOR
MURDER, (Wurtzel Prods.) FOX

D

HERBERT DALMAS

Joint Screenplay (with George Plympton)
LAST OF THE REDMEN, COL

HELEN DEUTSCH

Joint Screenplay (with Abraham Polonsky
and Frank Butler) GOLDEN EARRINGS, PAR

I. A. L. DIAMOND

Joint Screenplay (with Eugene Conrad and
Francis Swann) LOVE AND LEARN, WB

BASIL DICKEY

Joint Original Screenplay (with Franklyn
Adreon, Jesse Duffy and Sol Shor) JESSE
JAMES RIDES AGAIN, REP

JESSE DUFFY

Joint Original Screenplay (with Franklyn
Adreon, Basil Dickey and Sol Shor) JESSE
JAMES RIDES AGAIN, REP

In this listing of credits, published every other month in THE SCREEN WRITER, the following abbreviations are used: COL — Columbia Pictures Corporation; E-L — Eagle-Lion Studios; FOX — 20th Century-Fox Film Corporation; GOLDWYN — Samuel Goldwyn Productions, Inc.; MGM — Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios; MONO — Monogram Pictures Corporation; PAR — Paramount Pictures, Inc.; PRC — Producers Releasing Corporation of America; REP — Republic Productions, Inc.; RKO — RKO Radio Studios, Inc.; ROACH — Hal E. Roach Studio, Inc.; UA — United Artists Corporation; UNI — Universal-International Pictures; UWP — United World Pictures; WB — Warner Brothers Studios.

E

CYRIL ENDFIELD

Sole Screenplay and Joint Original Story (with Hal E. Chester) GENTLEMAN JOE PALOOKA, MONO

RICHARD ENGLISH

Joint Original Screenplay (with Art Arthur and Curtis Kenyon) THE FABULOUS DORSEYS, (Embassy Prods.) UA

KEN ENGLUND

Joint Screenplay (with Everett Freeman) THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY, GOLDWYN

HARRY J. ESSEX

Sole Screenplay BOSTON BLACKIE AND THE LAW, COL

F

LORAIN FIELDING

Joint Original Story (with Erwin Gelsey) THIS TIME FOR KEEPS, MGM

STEVE FISHER

Joint Original Screenplay (with Bradley King) GALLANT MAN, REP
Joint Screenplay (with Oliver H. P. Garrett) DEAD RECKONING, COL

HARRY FRASER

Joint Screenplay (with George Plympton) CHECK CARTER, DETECTIVE, (Esskay Pictures) COL

EVERETT FREEMAN

Joint Screenplay (with Ken Englund) THE SECRET LIFE OF WALTER MITTY, GOLDWYN

G

OLIVER H. P. GARRETT

Joint Screenplay (with Steve Fisher) DEAD RECKONING, COL

EILEEN GARY

Original Story OVER THE SANTA FE TRAIL, COL

ERWIN GELSEY

Joint Original Story (with Loraine Fielding) THIS TIME FOR KEEPS, MGM

BARNEY GERARD

Joint Original Story (with Edward F. Cline) BRINGING UP FATHER, MONO

MARTIN M. GOLDSMITH

Joint Screenplay (with Maurice Tombragel) THE LONE WOLF IN MEXICO, COL

FRANCES GOODRICH

Joint Screenplay (with Albert Hackett) SUMMER HOLIDAY, MGM

HOWARD J. GREEN

Joint Original Screenplay (with Lawrence Kimble and Arthur Ross) SAN QUENTIN, RKO

H

ALBERT HACKETT

Joint Screenplay (with Frances Goodrich) SUMMER HOLIDAY, MGM

LILLIE HAYWARD

Sole Original Screenplay BANJO, RKO

LAWRENCE HAZARD

Joint Original Screenplay (with Richard Wormser) WYOMING, REP

JAMES HILTON

Novel Basis SO WELL REMEMBERED, RKO

JEAN HOLLOWAY

Joint Adaptation (with Irving Brecher) SUMMER HOLIDAY, MGM

MILTON HOLMES

Sole Original Story JOHNNY O'CLOCK, COL

BERT HORSWELL

Sole Original Screenplay WEST OF DODGE CITY, COL

NORMAN HOUSTON

Joint Screenplay (with Gene Lewis) TRAIL STREET, RKO

IAN McLELLAN HUNTER

Sole Screenplay MR. DISTRICT ATTORNEY, COL

J

FELIX JACKSON

Sole Adaptation I'LL BE YOURS, UNI

K

FRANCES L. KAVANAUGH

Sole Original Screenplay THE CARAVAN TRAIL, PRC
Sole Original Screenplay COLORADO SERENADE, PRC

ROBERT E. KENT

Joint Original Screenplay (with Paul Gerard Smith) IT'S A JOKE, SON, Eagle-Lion

CURTIS KENYON

Joint Original Screenplay (with Richard English and Art Arthur) THE FABULOUS DORSEYS, (Embassy Prods.) UA

LAWRENCE KIMBLE

Joint Original Screenplay (with Arthur Ross and Howard J. Green) SAN QUENTIN, RKO

MIRIAM KISSINGER

Sole Original Screenplay DANGEROUS MONKEY, MONO

L

DAVID LANG

Joint Original Screenplay (with Milton Raison) WEB OF DANGER, REP

JONATHAN LATIMER

Sole Screenplay THEY WON'T BELIEVE ME, RKO

GLADYS LEHMAN

Sole Screenplay THIS TIME FOR KEEPS, MGM

PARKE LEVY

Sole Original Story HIT PARADE OF 1946, REP

GENE LEWIS

Joint Screenplay (with Norman Houston) TRAIL STREET, RKO

MARY LOOS

Sole Screenplay HIT PARADE OF 1946, REP

M

RANALD MacDOUGALL

Joint Screenplay (with Silvia Richards) POSSESSED, WB

BEN MADDOW

Sole Screenplay THEY WALK ALONE, COL

PHIL MAGEE

Sole Story THE LONE WOLF IN MEXICO, COL

BEN MARKSON

Adaptation MR. DISTRICT ATTORNEY, COL

SIDNEY MARSHALL

Story Basis MR. DISTRICT ATTORNEY, COL

MARY McCARTHY

*Contributor to Dialogue, CURLEY, ROACH

SETON I. MILLER

Joint Screenplay (with George Bruce) TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MAST, PAR

JOHN MONKS, JR.

Sole Screenplay THE BIG HAIRCUT, PAR

RICHARD MURPHY

Sole Screenplay BOOMERANG, FOX

N**EDMUND NORTH**

Sole Screenplay DISHONORED LADY, (Mars Film) UA

O**ARTHUR E. ORLOFF**

Sole Original Story ALIAS MR. TWILIGHT, COL

P**JOHN PAXTON**

Sole Screenplay SO WELL REMEMBERED, RKO

GEORGE PLYMPTON

Joint Screenplay (with Herbert Dalmas)

LAST OF THE REDMEN, COL

Joint Screenplay (with Harry Fraser)

CHECK CARTER, DETECTIVE, (Esskay Pictures) COL

ABRAHAM POLONSKY

Joint Screenplay (with Frank Butler and Helen Deutsch) GOLDEN EARRINGS, PAR

R**MILTON RAISON**

Joint Original Screenplay (with David Lang) WEB OF DANGER, REP

DOROTHY REID

Sole Screenplay CURLEY, ROACH

SILVIA RICHARDS

Joint Screenplay (with Randal MacDougall) POSSESSED, WB

*Academy Bulletin only.

ALLEN RIVKIN

Adaptation DEAD RECKONING, COL

ARTHUR ROSS

Joint Original Screenplay (with Lawrence Kimble and Howard J. Green) SAN QUENTIN, RKO

ROBERT ROSSEN

Sole Screenplay JOHNNY O'CLOCK, COL

LOUISE ROUSSEAU

Sole Screenplay OVER THE SANTA FE TRAIL, COL

S**ARTHUR SHEEKMAN**

Sole Screenplay DEAR RUTH, PAR

SIDNEY SHELTON

Sole Original Screenplay THE BACHELOR AND THE BOBBY-SOXER, RKO

SOL SHOR

Joint Original Screenplay (with Franklyn Adreon, Basil Dickey and Jesse Duffy) JESSE JAMES RIDES AGAIN, REP

PAUL GERARD SMITH

Joint Original Screenplay (with Robert E. Kent) IT'S A JOKE, SON, EAGLE-LION

EARLE SNELL

Sole Original Screenplay OUTLAWS OF SIOUX CITY, REP

FRANCIS SWANN

Joint Screenplay (with Eugene Conrad and I. A. L. Diamond) LOVE AND LEARN, WB

T**MAURICE TOMBRAGEL**

Joint Screenplay (with Martin Goldsmith) THE LONE WOLF IN MEXICO, COL

LAMAR TROTTI

Sole Screenplay MOTHER WORE TIGHTS, FOX

W**JERRY WARNER**

Sole Screenplay BRINGING UP FATHER, MONO

BRENDA WEISBERG

Sole Screenplay ALIAS MR. TWILIGHT, COL

ROBERT C. WILLIAMS

Sole Original Screenplay ALONG THE OREGON TRAIL, REP

RICHARD WORMSER

Joint Original Screenplay (with Lawrence Hazard) WYOMING, REP

**FACTS & FIGURES**

The charts which are usually a monthly feature of this magazine, under the above title, have been eliminated this month for lack of space, but will be back in our next issue, with more revealing data on the actual economic conditions in the industry.



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READ 'EM AND WEEP • MARTIN FIELD
AUTHORS TO SCREEN WRITERS • ALBERT MALTZ
GERMAN FILM PRODUCTION TODAY • ROBERT JOSEPH
Editorial • SWG Bulletin • AAA Press Survey
Correspondence • News Notes
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THE SCREEN WRITER

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by

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the **SCREEN WRITER**

A PUBLICATION OF THE SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD, INC.

DECEMBER, 1946

THIS ISSUE OF 'POLITICS'

PHILIP DUNNE

ONE OF the groups supporting a slate of candidates in the recent election adopted as its slogan: "keep politics out of the Guild and keep the Guild out of politics." I am sure that the ladies and gentlemen who framed this neat and attractive motto did so with the best of intentions and with no feeling of inconsistency, even though their campaign against certain board members seemed not entirely divorced from politics.

I am certain that the same intentions motivated the member who said at the Annual Meeting that anything political tended to divide the Guild, as well as those members who heckled a speaker with shouts of "irrelevant" when he mentioned the Wagner Act.

As a matter of fact, my name appeared on the slate supported by this group, and I must suppose that I received many votes for the Board on this issue of politics. I must be perfectly candid with these supporters and tell them that I shall do my utmost as a member of the new Board to keep pertinent political issues before the Guild, as I have always done

PHILIP DUNNE is a member of the SWG Executive Board and formerly a member of the Editorial Committee of *The Screen Writer*. He has been a frequent contributor to the magazine.

in the past, and as I believe the organizers of that particular slate know I have done. I shall continue to try to the best of my ability to convince the membership of the Guild not that the Guild had better get into politics, but that **it is already in politics up to its neck and had better make the best of what could become a critical situation — purely because of politics.**

It is the unhappy truth that we do not exist in a political vacuum. This Guild, along with every other employees' organization in the country, is a political football. It is my belief that trade unions and labor legislation were the primary issues in the recent campaign. Though the Republicans did not attack unions per se, there was a tacit understanding throughout the electorate that the Democrats were the labor party, the Republicans the party committed to the reform of New Deal labor practice and revision of New Deal labor legislation. I believe that the Republican victory largely represented a popular conviction that labor had grown too strong, that it was abusing its privileges and was, in its power, threatening the foundations of the American economic structure. I believe, therefore, that the Republicans have good reason to believe that they have a mandate to carry out legislative and administrative reforms to curb the power of the unions.

Now, all this may sound very normal and harmless and well within the scope of the American tradition. Reform, if it is only reform, cannot hurt the Screen Writers' Guild, or any other unions except those few whose leaders are obviously tyrants and racketeers. But it isn't as simple as that. In the first place, a great many of the labor tyrants and racketeers, because of their opposition to the CIO and the PAC, were on the Republican side in this campaign. Can anyone believe that Mr. John L. Lewis, for instance, is going to suffer because of a political turnover he did so much to bring about? In the second place, American politicians are traditionally more sharply colored in a political sense than the people who elect them. Many New Deal senators and representatives were far to the left of their typical constituents. Similarly, in this year, well-meaning middle-of-the-road voters, worried about strikes and labor "dictators," have sent to Congress many extreme reactionaries, who, on the record, have shown far more interest in crushing unions than in reforming them.

The storm signals have been flying for years. Let us study the velocity and direction of the winds now blowing on the American labor movement — and on our guild, which, whether we like it or not, is, to the politicians, part of that movement.

“Labor legislation,” specifically, means the National Labor Relations Act, popularly known as the Wagner Act. “Reform” of the Wagner Act means at best an attempt to amend it so that it ceases to be purely a law to protect the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively, and becomes instead a code covering the whole field of employer-employee relationships. At worst it means that the Act will be scuttled in whole or in part.

In my opinion, we have good reason to fear the worst. Even Senator Ball of Minnesota, considered one of the more liberal Republicans, has called for an amendment to the Act outlawing what he calls the “closed shop.” Many who read this article may feel that the “closed shop,” which means that employers may hire only members of a given union to do a given job, is undesirable. But, to judge from the context of the Senator’s remarks, he is not talking about the “closed shop” at all, but about the “union shop,” which is something quite different. To quote him, he proposes amendments to the Wagner Act to “prohibit making membership in a union a condition of employment.” This is not the “closed shop” but the “union shop,” a system whereby an employer may hire anyone he likes, provided that the recruit **then** joins the union which has a contract in the field. The “union shop” or “guild shop,” has always been the cornerstone of our guild’s strength. Without the protection of a “guild shop,” we have felt, correctly, that we would have no guild at all. Senator Ball proposes to deprive us of this protection.

Let us analyze his arguments. One principle behind the “union shop” is that, while it opens the door to fresh talent, it requires that all must help to pay the freight of benefits which all enjoy. Senator Ball admits the validity of this principle, but thinks it can be worked out by “assessing all employees . . . to support their share of the cost of negotiating and maintaining a collective bargaining contract, without forcing them to join the union.” I submit that this is a direct invitation to industrial anarchy. Under such conditions, who would collect the assessments? Who would enforce their payment? The union to which the employee

doesn't have to belong? The employer through a company union? If such a plan were to go into effect, labor relations would soon become a nightmare for employer and employee alike. And to make matters worse, the Senator is discussing this question of assessments as if it were the **only** argument in favor of the "union shop." He completely omits a far more cogent and basic argument: that the "union shop" prevents a malevolent employer (and I believe, despite the Senator, that there are such animals) from breaking the union or guild by packing his pay-roll with non-union members. I find it difficult to believe that Senator Ball is unaware of the cogency of this argument. I think that he omits it because it is unanswerable.

Later in his interview, he is quoted as saying that he wants to "strip the National Labor Relations Board of much of its authority." Here we find echoed by a responsible legislator the familiar journalistic canard that the Board is somehow dictatorial. The truth is that all of its decisions are subject to judicial review. It appears to me that Senator Ball, to be consistent, must also propose to strip the Federal Courts of "much of their authority." What the Senator must mean is that the Board's power to act at all must be removed. What kind of a law is a law that can't be enforced? What kind of protection to the workingman is the naked good will of his employer, unsupported by any code of enforceable law? And this is a "liberal" Republican talking, one who was elected with considerable labor support.

Senator Ball's proposals would in themselves distort the Wagner Act beyond recognition. And he is far from being alone. Time and space prevent me from outlining all the "reforms" openly advocated by Senators and representatives, most of them members of the new majority party. It would take only a few of the many proposed "reforms," together with the outlawing of the "union shop," together with a "limitation" on the Board's authority to return American labor relations to the condition of anarchy prevailing in the late twenties and early thirties. This condition would inevitably result in a new splurge of company unionism, a sharp increase in jurisdictional disputes, and the slow death of all legitimate unions **not strong enough to fight it out to a finish on the picket lines.**

And that, ladies and gentlemen, means the Screen Writers' Guild.

Harry Bridges's longshoremen won't go under; they'll have a tough fight, but they're a tough union. John L. Lewis's mine workers will survive; John won the election, and even if the Republicans disregard their political debt to him, he has yet to show any great respect for laws which don't suit him.

But what about us, who abhor violence, who obey the laws, who shudder at the very thought of a strike? Where do we stand without the Wagner Act, or with an Act so crippled as to have become inoperative? Our history is painfully explicit on this point. In 1933 we suffered a fifty percent pay cut and formed the Guild. In 1936, while the Wagner Act was on the statute books but was consistently flouted because employers expected the Supreme Court to knock it out, our Guild was attacked on a phony issue, split by mercenaries and outright traitors, and "went underground" with one hundred and forty-nine militantly faithful members. In 1937, the Supreme Court validated the Wagner Act and, immediately, for that reason and that reason alone, the Guild was revived. Under the protection of this law, we recruited membership in the studios. Under the provisions of this law, we overwhelmed the Screen Playwrights in an election, and forced the producers to bargain collectively with us. This Guild, which some think should stay out of politics, owes its existence and its contract to a political law, sponsored by **politicians**, written by **politicians**, being a **political** issue in every campaign since, and now in danger of destruction because of a purely **political** turnover in the nation.

To say that the Guild should stay out of politics is not conservatism — it is pure King Canutism. We are about to be engulfed in politics — the other fellow's politics — and we had better do something about it.

I have concentrated on the Wagner Act because it can affect us most spectacularly. There is much other legislation to consider, including the tax and copyright proposals which are an intrinsic part of the AAA program. I think it is obvious that we can expect little along this line from a "business man's Congress" as the Los Angeles Times has called it. Publishers, motion picture and radio producers are also business men. But such things as tax and copyright legislation represent an **advance**

for writers. We are talking now only about holding our own. Our strategy must, for the present, be a defensive one.

It is possible that I am being over-pessimistic concerning the Wagner Act's chances of survival, at least for the next two years. In the first place, there is a Democratic President who has stated his opposition to crippling amendments. There is still a small but energetic block of New Deal democrats and Liberal Republicans, far weaker numerically than the Republican-Conservative Democrat coalition which has had a practical majority in Congress for the past several sessions, but still vocal and influential. Add to these those Republicans narrowly elected from industrial districts, who must bear in mind the likelihood of a larger Democratic turnout in a presidential election and who need labor votes, plus some Liberal Republican recruits, and there might be enough to sustain Mr. Truman's veto. If I were making a book, I should give the Wagner Act a little worse than a fifty-fifty chance of survival — until 1948. A Republican sweep in that year would inevitably doom it.

If the Wagner Act goes, then what? My guess is that the first crisis in Guild-producer relationships would bring a company union into the field. The expiration of our present contract in 1949 would be the logical moment for this to happen. It might happen sooner. For instance, we might suddenly find ourselves in the middle of a "jurisdictional" dispute with the I.A.T.S.E. With no Wagner Act, we would have no recourse to law. There would be no law. We could only have recourse to picket lines if the producers should take a hostile or "neutral" stand in any such dispute.

On the theory that it is far better that our autonomy and integrity be protected by law than by our ability to outstay our opponents in a protracted strike, I have submitted to my fellow Guild members a tentative legislative action program which has been approved by the Executive Board and which will be presented to a membership meeting for discussion and analysis.

Please note the distinction between **legislative** and **political** action. We have long since established precedents for direct **legislative** action, supporting or opposing legislation which directly affects us as a Guild.

We have never taken any kind of **political** action, supporting or opposing candidates who might in turn support or oppose legislation which affects us. The time may well come when the Guild will want to consider direct political action. I am, however, proposing nothing of the sort at this time. The program I suggest is purely legislative, and requires no new precedent. I shall move for its immediate adoption by the membership:

1. The Executive Board shall direct the Legislative Advisory Committee of the Guild to prepare at once an analysis of the Wagner Act and other labor legislation now on the statute books. The purpose of this analysis shall be to determine how much of this legislation the Guild needs to safeguard its existence as a democratic autonomous organization. The analysis shall include proposals for new legislation and amendments to existing legislation which have already been made publicly by members of the new Congress.

2. The Executive Board shall then prepare a questionnaire addressed to a list of key members of Congress. This list shall include not only our local representatives and senators, but the majority and minority leaders and whips, as well as all members of committees in both houses having jurisdiction over labor legislation and congressional rules. If it is considered advisable, the questionnaire shall be sent to all members of Congress. The questionnaire shall set forth frankly the Guild's position and its specific recommendations for labor legislation. It shall emphasize the non-political nature of the Guild. It shall call on each congressman to reply promptly to the Guild, answering all questions in the questionnaire and setting forth unequivocally and in detail his own intentions in regard to such legislation.

3. Copies of the analysis and the proposed questionnaire shall be sent to the membership for study prior to a membership meeting called for the purpose of endorsing, amending or rejecting both documents. Lot chairmen shall be instructed to call lot meetings to discuss these documents in advance of the membership meeting.

4. If the membership approves, the questionnaires shall be sent.

5. Copies of the replies as received shall be made available to the

entire membership. The membership shall also be notified of failure to reply.

6. Supplementary questionnaires shall be sent to our congressional mailing-list as new legislation is introduced in Washington.

7. The Guild shall employ a representative to sit in at all congressional hearings on labor legislation and to appear as a witness on behalf of the Guild.

8. A factual record shall be kept of the votes of congressmen on legislation which we consider affects our existence as a Guild. This record shall from time to time be made available to the membership.

9. The above actions shall be taken alone if necessary, but, if possible, the cooperation of the other guilds in the Authors' League shall be obtained, as well as that of other guilds and unions within the motion picture industry, including the "Talent Guilds," the CSU, the IATSE and the independents.

10. The Executive Board shall be empowered to cooperate at short notice with other guilds and unions throughout the nation on any specific piece of legislation previously endorsed or opposed by the Guild.

There is nothing very startling in these proposals. They will require the expenditure of a great deal of time and money, but this should not deter us. We have a comfortable surplus in the treasury, and our rainy day has come. I profoundly hope that such tactics will be successful. Government in a democracy is a matter of pressure. It is possible that the prestige of our Guild, with the many famous names it can command, will lend considerable weight to our arguments. At least we will not be alone. The whole weight of the American labor movement, backed by the large body of independent liberals, will be thrown in on our side.

If we fail, and total failure is always a grim possibility, we shall at least know beyond the shadow of a doubt who our friends are and who our enemies are. We will have a guide for individual political action in 1948. And perhaps in 1948, our membership will be ready to consider

taking the more drastic step of direct political group action, if only by such action can the Guild survive. We can cross that bridge when we come to it.

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CANNES FESTIVAL AWARDS

The following is the full list of international awards made at the Cannes Film Festival, held in France from Sept. 20 to Oct. 5:

Grand Prizes (for the best film from each country): Czechoslovakia, *Men Without Wings*; Denmark, *Red Earth*; France, *Pastoral Symphony*; Great Britain, *Brief Encounter*; Italy, *The Open City*; India, *La ville basse* (*The Other Side of the Tracks* — exact English title not available); Mexico, *Maria Candelaria*; Sweden, *The Test*; Switzerland, *The Last Chance*; U. S. S. R., *The Turning Point*; U. S. A., *Lost Week-End*; (Egypt and Portugal received no awards, none of their productions having warranted one);

International Jury Prize: *The Battle of the Rails* (France);

International Directing Prize: René Clément (producer-director, *The Battle of the Rails*, technical advisor to Jean Cocteau on *Beauty and the Beast*, and to Noel-Noel on *Father Tranquil*);

International Prize of the Society of Film Authors (Directors' Union) (for best direction): Romm (*Girl No. 217*, U. S. S. R.);

International Prize for Feminine Acting: Michèle Morgan (*Pastoral Symphony*);

International Prize for Masculine Acting: Ray Milland (*Lost Week-End*);

International Prize for Cinematography: Figueroa (*Maria Candelaria*);

International Prize of the Society of Dramatic Authors and Composers (for screen writing): Chirskoff (*The Turning Point* and, in collaboration with Arnstam, *Zoya*);

Prize of the Society of Authors, Composers and Publishers of Music (for scoring): Georges Auric (*Pastoral Symphony*, and *Beauty and the Beast*);

International Color-Film Prize: *The Stone Flower* (U. S. S. R.);

International Feature-Length Documentary Prize: *Berlin* (U. S. S. R.);

International Feature-Length Animated Cartoon Prize: *Make Mine Music* (U.S.A.);

International Documentary Shorts Prize: *Shadows on the Snow* (Sweden);

International Scientific Shorts Prize: *The City of the Bees* (U. S. S. R.);

International Educational Shorts Prize: *Salt Mines of Wieliecska* (Poland);

International Newsreel Prize: *Youth of Our Country* (U. S. S. R.);

International Short Cartoon Prize: *The Robbers and the Animals* (Czechoslovakia);

International Short Fiction Film Prize: *Christmas Dream* (Czechoslovakia).

A special prize was also awarded to the French film, *Epaves* (Flotsam).

And concurrently with the Festival, the following awards were made: **Peace Prize**, for a full-length feature film, *The Last Chance*; for a documentary, *Youth of Our Country*. **International Critics' Prize**, for films entered in the Festival, *Brief Encounter*; for films exhibited concurrently, *Farrebique* (France).

★ ★ ★

NATHANAEEL WEST

JOHN SANFORD

YOU take up a paper sometimes, intending to fritter away a few minutes chasing type across a page. You're expecting someone, maybe, or you're waiting to put in a call, or maybe you just want to look busy while you waste a small part of your life. And later, you rarely remember what you read, because you read it during a piece of time that you had no use for and that you're glad is gone. But one such time you've not forgotten, nor will you ever, and that was when the paper you happened to take up told you coldly of the death, in an auto-smash near El Centro, of a guy you'd gone to kindergarten with: Pep West.

He's been dead six years now, you tell yourself, and you write that down, as if it were an important thing to say about a dead friend — and so it is, but only if it makes more vivid the time when he was a living friend. And on that thought, you find yourself looking up, and you see alongside you the manuscript of a novel, and you look beyond that to a bookcase where, under glass, you've carefully preserved the first and only editions of your four other novels, and you think: Why, there's half your life! in those five books, there's half of all the days and nights you've spent on earth! And you shake your head, not to get rid of the thought, but to settle it, to sink it in, and the reason you do that while you have Pep West on another level of your mind is that you'd never have written a line if it hadn't been for him. And it doesn't really make much difference whether the lines you've written have been good or bad, and whether the lines to come will be better or worse. The point is, at his example and with his encouragement, you went and used half of your-

JOHN SANFORD, a distinguished young novelist, responds here to a request for a memorial essay on NATHANAEEL WEST, whose death six years ago this month ended a brilliant writing career in films as well as in the novel.

self on words. That's why you shake your head when you think of him as six years dead. It isn't that you mean you'd change places with him if you could bring him back. Few men, and not you among them, could say that and not lie. But it's that you so very earnestly wish to God he hadn't been such a damn poor driver, which you and many others knew he was long before his poor driving killed him.

And yet, it bears in on you that Pep's poor driving was Pep, that it was something he could no more have unlearned than he could have unlearned his way of walking, which was a sort of shamle, awkward and out of sync, or his way of putting on a coat, which made you think he was trying to climb down the arm-hole and come out of the cuff, or his way of picking up change, which couldn't have been harder for him if the coins were made of water. He was always tripping, always fumbling, always ill-related to still objects, and he was like that in everything you'd ever seen him put his hand to — everything but writing, and there alone he seemed to be at home, moving language with such ease and grace as he could never master in so little a thing as lighting a cigarette.

So you come to understand that he died more because he was Pep West to the end than because it fell that two cars were nearing an intersection out of El Centro at the same moment. And this too you write down, as if this too were an important thought — and then all of a sudden you get sick to hell of important thoughts, thoughts that explain the smash-up, maybe, that take the dents out of the fenders of that station-wagon, and that pump air back into the blown-out tires, but thoughts that heal no fractures in Pep's skull and breathe no breath into his lungs.

And now you have **un**important thoughts, and the first and most unimportant is about a day in Harlem when you and Pep were kids, and you were standing on a grass island in Seventh Avenue, and a bus came along, and he astounded you by reeling off its name: De Dion Bouton. And staring in wonderment and envy and admiration, you said, "Gee, Nate, how j'ever find that out?" and he said, "Well, I'll tell you, Julie. I ast the driver." And then a second bus passed by, and he named that too: Métallurgique. But you never did know how you remembered; you were still astounded.

And you have an unimportant thought about another time when

the two of you were kids — eleven, you both were, maybe twelve — and it had to do with a dandy book you were reading: Frank Merriwell In Peru (the one where some Indian threw a poisoned knife at Frank, and it cut his hand, but he was very brave, and he didn't get scared, and it turned out that the poison was only on one edge of the blade, and it was the **other** edge that cut him!). And Pep came up on the roof where you were reading that dandy book, and he had a book too, only it was certainly a dumb kind of book to waste time on. You couldn't even pronounce the name of the guy that wrote it: Dasty Evsko, or Dusty Esky, something like that. Anyway, the guy was a Russian. You were all set for Pep to suggest a swap, and you knew just what you were going to say: "Listen. Is there anything in there about poison-knives? No? Well, just start reading your own book." But you never got a chance to say that, because that's just what he did: started to read his own book.

And you have an unimportant thought about how he came to get the name Pep, and you smile at that, because you know there are lots of versions of it, most of them by people who weren't there. The guy you'd gotten yours from was an eye-witness, though, and he had every reason to keep his eyes open: he was pitching for Camp Paradox that day, and what Pep did, or didn't do, cost him the game. They were playing Pine Tree Camp for the Adirondack championship, and Pep was on the Paradox team because he was one of the three campers who owned a fielder's glove. He sure-God hadn't made it because he could field, and neither could he hit far or run fast. The game stayed tight till the late innings, when Pine Tree loaded the bags with two down. The third out looked like a cinch. A long high fly was heading straight for Pep, who didn't have to budge to make the catch. Pine Tree chalked up four runs and the game, though, when the ball hit Pep on the head and rolled away for a homer. He'd been standing there mooning about this Desty Esky, or Dovsky Evsky, or whatever it was. He wasn't Nate after that, not to anybody. He was Pep.

The next unimportant thought you have has to do with Pep's father, and it's just about as unimportant as thoughts can get. Pep wasn't the kind to do much demonstrating — at any rate, not in public. He could get impatient enough, as you well knew, having given him plenty to be impatient over, and he could get so shaking sore that he'd actually

miss his mouth with a butt, and he could get all worked up telling you about an idea he'd run across in somebody's book, or a figure of speech, or an anecdote about Swinburne and Watts-Dunton — but those aren't the demonstrations you mean. Except in one case, it was impossible for Pep to parade affection. The exception was his father — Max, he always called him. A shy man, Max was, and a very simple and homely man, but gentle to the limit of the word's meaning, and quiet, and warm, and sometimes smiling in a tired but radiant way that made you think of Lincoln after Appomattox and before Ford's. Max has been gone a long time too, but you'd seen Pep in his company many many times, and Pep was plain wild about him. He loved that Max, even in public. But as you said, this is an unimportant thought.

And then a score of unimportant thoughts about Pep crowded out of you: his pet-phrase, "to coin a phrase"; his habit of speaking clichés in italics; his fat-lady joke, which he must've told you a dozen times; his being fresh out of matches everywhere and always; his odd stunt of buying a pack of butts, offering you one, taking one himself, and then giving you the pack as if he'd gotten it from you; his other nickname, Tweedy Boy; his pointer Danny; his Brooks valise, five feet long and two feet wide; his collection of Beerbohm caricatures; his little brag that he could rewrite Dostoevsky with a pair of shears; his agony in the presence of sentiment, his physical agony; his good imitations of The Schnozzola; his trick of reading his own stuff back to himself aloud; his handing you a shotgun once up at Viele Pond by poking you in the belly with the muzzle, all absently, understand, all awkwardly and out of sync, and with the hammer cocked; his honest and overwhelming desire to write a great book; and his very near miss with Miss Lonelyhearts.

And remembering how you wept after reading about him in the paper that day, you find yourself wanting to say, now after six years: "Pep, old kid, I hope you won't mind if . . . Well, I mean if you'll promise not to . . . That is, please don't be embarrassed if I tell you . . . But, damn it, Pep, you don't like it when people are sentimental, so you'll have to understand what I'm trying to say without my saying it. And you do understand, don't you, kid? You do understand that I . . ."

★ ★ ★

R E A D ' E M A N D W E E P

MARTIN FIELD

FOR genuine surrealism, read your newspapers on the American Authors' Authority. They make Salvadore Dali look like a tintype photographer. The AAA is a huge, snarling tiger. The writer is hanging on to his tail, and afraid to let go. The tiger is lunging ferociously at innocent, frightened newspaper and magazine and book publishers, radio executives, and movie magnates. He threatens to devour them all in one fell gulp.

That's the nightmare image being created in the minds of the public by the opponents of AAA, led by The Chicago Fibune, the Worst Newspapers, and The Hollywood Distorter. Their concern about the writer's freedom of expression being hampered is shallow and hypocritical indeed in light of the clear, unanimously-passed Guild resolution which safeguards the writer's right to express himself as he pleases. In all the verbiage assailing the writer's Emancipation Proclamation, there is scant mention of just what AAA will do for the writer and what abuses will be wiped out. In short, the secret of writers backing AAA so unanimously is as simple as the meaning of these two words: More Money.

And it's the dough we writers are concerned with, just like Shakespeare and Shaw, two wonderful examples for us. Shakespeare very practically got to own a piece of the Globe Theatre package deal. As for screen writer Shaw who, we understand, is a devoted reader of this pub-

MARTIN FIELD is a screen writer who has contributed previously to this magazine and who has been active in defense of writers' rights.

lication, his play royalties are said to fluctuate mathematically — as go the rates of exchange, so go the Shavian royalties.

Let's get factual about it, and look at some examples of writers who, due to lack of an AAA, sold their rights for pitiful sums or otherwise were deprived of a fair share. If the wails of all writers were to be collected, a mountainous task, you wouldn't be able to hear these stories for the noise of gritting teeth and anguished groans. This is unclassified matter, neither the most horrible nor the most exceptional, simply run-of-the-mill cases of pretty average deals whereby the writer gets it in the neck.

A few years back, two ladies named Cornelia Otis Skinner and Emily Kimbrough got together and wrote a gay, amusing book about a girlish trip to Paris which they called *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*. Paramount bought the book for \$50,000 and made a gay, amusing picture out of it called, surprisingly enough, *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*. In fact, so gay and amusing was the picture that Paramount promptly sent out an order to have a sequel whipped up. It was, and under the title *Our Hearts Were Growing Up*, it was a fitting successor to the first film.

Ladies Skinner and Kimbrough didn't get an additional cent for the additional picture made possible by their original book. They sued Paramount on the ground that the leading characters in both pictures were themselves and therefore they should get something for the use of themselves as screen characters. Paramount, however, proved that legally Paramount owned all rights to Skinner and Kimbrough on the screen. The girls had literally sold themselves to the movies!

Incidentally, speaking of law suits, the average writer in this town is very slow to sue a movie company, the reasons ranging from fear of blacklisting to underestimation of a story property's value. But when a movie company thinks its literary property rights have been infringed, it's quick to throw an expensive law suit at the head of the writer, as witness the recent unsuccessful case of Columbia versus Norman Krasna.

Unfortunately, many writers don't seem to realize just how valuable a story property can be. A screen writer sells "all rights" to a piece of work and a movie version of his script seems to be the whole works to him. Actually, when you write a story, you have created a property that

can, properly handled, bring you income from these twenty different sources: Magazine or newspaper (first serial); magazine or newspaper (second serial); magazine or newspaper, foreign; book, trade edition; book, reprint; book, foreign; book, omnibus, anthology; motion picture; radio; television; dramatization; musical comedy; amateur theatrical; stock; book publication of dramatic version; 8mm. and 16mm. films; amateur and educational; mechanical and electrical reproduction; comic strip; promotion of merchandise.

Twenty different ways to cut the literary pie you've baked on your hot typewriter, but how many writers get the toothsome benefit of each savory cut? All too often, especially in Hollywood, when a story is bought, that means "all rights," and that covers everything. Three little words, American Authors' Authority, mean that writers will no longer be taken advantage of, and if any one is going to cut the writer's pie, it's going to be the writer himself.

Here's a typical "all rights" story. A couple of writers, Leon Gutterman and Edwin Westrate, got together and wrote *Smart Woman*, a massive screen story which stopped just short of including all camera angles. An actress-producer saw in the story a perfect vehicle for her distinctive talents and lost little time in closing a deal for its purchase for \$30,000. The two writers were thoroughly elated. They'd gotten what they considered to be a pretty fair price for a screen story. However their elation was short-lived. Within days after the story was bought, announcements began to appear in the trade papers.

Their screen story was being turned into a stage play, an easy enough job since the story was such a tightly-knit affair. Their story was being turned into a package deal for radio, since it had the basis for a strong weekly dramatic show. Their screen story was being turned into a comic strip for newspaper syndication, that is a comic strip like most of the "comic" strips, nothing funny about it. Their screen story was being turned into a novel for book publication and also magazine and newspaper serialization.

The two writers, the creators and builders of this rich literary property, get nothing from any monies realized from these "subsidiary" rights. Is it any wonder that when Jim Cain spoke on the AAA at a

recent Guild meeting, these two writers were among his most fervent applauders? (They asked me that night to present their horrible example to their fellow writers.)

Of course, we understand that this tragic tale is no reflection on either the writers or the producers. The nature of the present market is such that if a writer should try to hold out on selling "all rights" he runs the risk of not making a sale. As for the producers, they cannot be blamed for being good business men and doing their best by their stockholders on story deals. Individuals and companies named are simply examples representative of a general state of affairs which can only be changed by a general application of healing, invigorating AAA.

One writer, previously mentioned, who seems to realize the need for an AAA is a gentleman named James M. Cain. It's easy to understand why. Some fifteen years ago he wrote a best-selling novel called *Double Indemnity*. His agent quoted a sales price of \$25,000 and five studios were hot, when the Hays office said they wouldn't pass the novel. The deal turned cold. Eight years later, Paramount offered \$7,500 for *Double Indemnity* on the understanding that if the screenplay passed the Hays Office, Cain would get \$7,500 more. The screenplay passed the Hays Office and was made into a highly profitable picture. But Cain was \$10,000 poorer eight years later.

The Postman Always Rings Twice, another best-selling Cain novel, was bought by MGM. Metro "naturally" insisted that radio rights and all other rights not held by the publisher of the book be included. Even though backed by the power of a good property like *The Postman*, Cain, as an individual writer, couldn't hold out alone against the studio's insistence. The picture version of *The Postman* eventually was a smash. The radio rights to *The Postman* alone could keep Cain in comfort for the rest of his days — IF they belonged to him. But they don't.

When originally bought, *The Postman* also ran into Hays Office trouble. MGM promptly leased it to a French producer, who made it in France as *Le dernier tournant*. Reported price was \$10,000 as advance on royalties, which probably repaid Metro's entire investment. Cain did not get an additional cent.

For *Mildred Pierce*, a picture which got an Academy Award for its star and socko box-office returns for its producers, Cain received

\$15,000. Warner Brothers also bought SWG member Cain's novel *Serenade*, this time for \$35,000. Included in the rights that Warners bought, in both cases, was the studio's reservation of radio rights for eighteen months for "protection." Since the radio rights are most valuable precisely during this eighteen-month period when public interest is at its peak, AAA-less writer Cain is deprived of a considerable amount of revenue.

To top it all, remakes of these pictures, *Double Indemnity*, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, *Mildred Pierce*, and *Serenade*, leave Cain out. And who would want to bet that one or more of these high-grossing properties will not be remade long before the copyrights expire?

Three recent examples of remakes which didn't cost studios an additional penny for story rights are: *Weekend at the Waldorf*, remade from Vicki Baum's novel *Grand Hotel*; *Easy to Wed*, remade from *Libeled Lady*, an original screenplay by Maurine Watkins, Howard Emmett Rogers, and George Oppenheimer; and *Summer Holiday*, remade from *Ah Wilderness!*, a play by Eugene O'Neill. The second example, that of *Libeled Lady*, an original screenplay, should be of particular interest to screen writers. Especially to those few screen writers who may feel, with insular smugness, that preservation of literary property rights is a problem only for novelists and playwrights.

This is how one writer had his novel bought by a movie company "cheap." He'd worked on it for two years. Then it was published. A tough, gutty story, it got good reviews but no movie bids. This writer, innocent as he was of studio wiles and stratagems, didn't know that sometimes it takes years before a book sells to the industry. He thought that if his book didn't sell right after publication, it was dead.

Well, one day his agent called him on the phone. "Joe, Combined Pictures is slightly interested," the agent said. "Would you take as little as \$1,000?" The writer, a married man with a kid, hesitated. A thousand was better than nothing, and he thought, very practically, of all the shoes and clothes and stuff it could buy in those pre-inflation days. But still, only one thousand . . . ? The agent hung up.

While the agent negotiated with the studio, the writer was given to understand that interest in his book was quite lukewarm. At best, it

was viewed as an item to pick up and put in storage and then, maybe, eventually, make of it a small picture with new, untried actors. A sort of test picture, that's all.

After a proper period of suspense, the agent called again, and his voice was enthused. "Good news, Joe. I got them up to \$2,000."

A week later the contract was signed and the sale completed. Then came the deluge. The papers trumpeted the news that Combined Pictures was casting one of its greatest productions. Four top stars. Their ace producer. A high-priced director. And what was the story on which all this care and money was being lavished? Our writer friend's novel which had been worth only \$2,000, tops!

Later the whole story came out. Combined Pictures' biggest star had been eating his expensive head off on payroll while the studio frantically hunted for a story to suit him. The one story they had that fitted his type was a prizefighter story, but to their dismay his potbelly, however they tried to restrain it with corseting, prevented him from being photographed in tights. You can't make a prizefighter story without showing the hero in tights somewhere.

Along came this tough, gutty novel. It was the perfect story for the star. So while they negotiated and haggled with the writer's agent to keep from paying a fair price, on the ground that it was a small sale for a small picture, the screenplay was written BEFORE the book was bought, and almost before the ink was dry on the purchase contract, the picture was in production.

At this moment, we may add, this very same picture is cleaning up in the foreign market closed down by the war. For its \$2,000 story purchase, the studio got a picture which netted, after all costs, a mere \$1,800,000. The writer informs us that he received not one additional cent for his contribution — not even a "Thank you," for that matter.

Another writer, Aubrey Wisberg, has an interesting situation to report. His screen story, *Heaven Only Knows*, is being made into a high-budget picture by Seymour Nebenzal. Ernest Haycox, who wrote the adaptation of Wisberg's original, fell in love with the story so much that he proceeded to novelize the story. Since Haycox is a widely-read novelist, the book he has written promises to bring in hefty royalties. Mr. Nebenzal, delighted at the exploitation value of a best-selling novel

based on his picture, seems happy to let the novelist keep all royalties. But the writer of the screen original disputes the right of the novelizer to keep all the royalties. Although he signed the standard "all rights" contract form, he feels he should, in all justice, get a share of the novel royalties and credit for his original story which inspired the novelization.

This is the kind of situation which absorbs writers' time and energy and would not arise when the "all rights" bogey is finally laid low through AAA.

Good ideas are scarce. A writer is lucky if, once in his life, he gives birth to a highly exploitable idea. With the help of a set-up like AAA, a writer can exploit that rare good idea so that it brings him a fair share of the "take." But without AAA — ?

Victor Hammond wrote a screen original called Detective Kitty O'Day. Monogram read the story, liked it and bought it. Naturally, "all rights." The finished picture grossed well. Monogram called in Victor Hammond and assigned him to write another original story based on this character he had created, Kitty O'Day, and Hammond wrote a second story called Adventures of Kitty O'Day.

Other producers, seeing Hammond edited as the author of the Kitty O'Day stories, approached him and asked him to sell them another original based on this character. But Hammond couldn't oblige them. Kitty O'Day belonged to Monogram. When Monogram wants another story written about Kitty O'Day, they will probably ask Victor Hammond, as the man best qualified, to write it. But Monogram is under no obligation to hire Hammond for this task. They can ask any writer they wish to develop another story for them about their own character.

Another case of a writer with a good idea and what happened to it is that of Al Martin. Martin's screen original, Rusty, a story about a dog, was bought by Columbia. When the finished picture, released as The Adventures of Rusty, made a hit, Columbia promptly upped the budget and made a sequel called Return of Rusty. Now the studio is launching a series of Rusty pictures, three of them a year, no less. Although Al Martin no longer is connected with the writing of these pictures, the screen credits include: "Based on the characters created by Al Martin."

The public may be under the illusion that screen writer Martin is suitably rewarded. Fact is that Martin gets credit, but no cash.

There are many, many more stories like these. It might be a good idea for writers to have their experiences published in *The Screen Writer*. If this piece stimulates such confessionals, then it will have served to fine purpose.

These have been clinical notes which may some day be part of a sort of Krafft-Ebing work — case histories of abnormal writing relations with motion picture companies in pre-AAA days.

Did I say Read 'em and Weep? Better yet, Read 'Em and Work — so that AAA can become a functioning, protective writers' organization all the sooner.

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MEDICAL SCRIPT WRITERS WANTED

The Screen Writer has received the following letter from Wilbur Chace Lown, of the Motion Picture Laboratory, U. S. Naval Medical School, National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, 14, Md. It is published here as a public service, and interested writers may get in touch with Mr. Lown at the address above:

Medicine needs script writers.

Medical education must condense the massive weight of research and clinical facts blocking the long, long road of medical study.

Film instruction, incisive in fundament and dogma, exact in reporting, can carry this condensation to the class room, the hospital and the practitioner.

But film instruction is young and has been too casually sired — by Entertainment out of Theatre. A new breed is needed — by Skill out of Education.

A screen writer is needed here who will use his skill in the production of medical films.

While you are not a placement bureau, can and will you help with contacts?

★ ★ ★

GERMAN FILM PRODUCTION TODAY

ROBERT JOSEPH

ON THE 15th of October last, Berlin was treated to a gala première of Germany's first post-war film production, the DEFA film, *Die Mörder Sind Unter Uns* (The Murderers Are Among Us), at the Staatsoper, produced under Russian license, supervision and control.

There had been film production in Germany before — documentaries like *Todesmuhlen* (Mills of Death) and *Action Stork*, produced by the American and British Army respectively, and *Welt im Film* and *Augenzeuge* (Eyewitness), an Anglo-American newsreel and a Russian Army-controlled newsreel, respectively. But this DEFA production was the first full-length feature produced entirely by Germans, an important event in German motion picture history.

Nor were the British and the French less active in their zones in granting permission to Germans to produce features, documentaries, shorts and newsreels. Both of these Allies had also granted film production licenses to Germans. Only the American operation under Information Control Division (ICD) had seemingly made no progress in granting licenses or in getting production started, and it seemed that our Allies were ahead of the apparently somnolent United States Army operation.

What was happening to the relatively excellent facilities at Gastelgasteig in Munich, and Tempelhof Studios in Berlin? If our Allies had succeeded in finding capable and politically acceptable men to make pictures, why had not ICD and its Film Officers shown the same acumen

ROBERT JOSEPH is a Hollywood publicist and writer who served as U. S. Deputy Film Officer for Germany and Film Officer for the Berlin area.

and zeal and imagination? Was ICD, and therefore American Military Government, being remiss in the American pledge at Potsdam to make Germany a treaty-respecting, self-sustaining and democratically guided nation?



The story of what is going on in the slowly reviving German film industry today begins officially on May 12, 1945, four days after the Wehrmacht capitulation in the Reims schoolhouse.

In a policy manual issued by SHAEF Headquarters - Psychological Warfare Division, the stated policy of Occupation authorities was: "Information services in Germany will be controlled to further military and political objectives." Information services included radio, theatre, press, publications, television, music and films. Military objectives meant the disarming and demilitarizing of Germany. Political objectives were to be outlined in July by Stalin, Truman and Attlee in the Potsdam Agreement.

Three phases were outlined in the control of Information services: (1) prohibition of existing German information services; (2) Use of Allied information services and reconnaissance on German information services; and (3) gradual transition, from region to region, and from medium to medium, to German information services.

The First Phase, prohibition of German information services, as it pertains to films, was accomplished for SHAEF-PWD by the vicissitudes of war. Germany was in complete chaos. Hundreds of film theaters were bombed. There was no power in many leading cities. Railroads were not functioning. Normal exhibition and distribution of films was impossible. In Berlin, for example, there had been no film showings since the end of January, 1945, when the Russians were on the outskirts of the city. There was, interestingly enough, however, some production, for at Bavaria Filmkunst Studios at Gastelgasteig, Munich, a Third Army reconnaissance team came into the studio to find them hard at work on an Emil Jannings film. It should be remembered for posterity that the director argued with the commanding officer that he could not understand what his film making had to do with the war, and why it was impossible for him to continue shooting.

In films the second part of the Second Phase began almost as soon

as Americans had crossed into German territory. Special PWD reconnaissance teams began gathering information about the German film industry even before the manual was issued. This operation was undertaken by John Lefebvre of the U. S. Army, a former assistant sales manager for Metro in Berlin, and now in Cairo for the same firm, and Major Evans for the British. (*)

When PWD became ICD, and therefore exclusively an American operation, reconnaissance was continued by Lts. Josselson and Alter in Berlin, working under Col. F. N. Leonard; and Walter Klinger, formerly a Metro employee in Berlin and Vienna, and currently with Warners' Hollywood International Department, working under Col. Rogers in Munich. The job of reporting what the German film industry had been like, and what was left of it, took an unimaginable amount of work. But the information had to be collected for ICD Headquarters as a basis on which to begin Phase Three.

It is Phase Three, the turning over of Information Services to Germans, in which we are interested. Nowhere was the problem of how to begin German information services more complicated and perplexing than in the motion picture field. By January 1st, 1946, radio stations were operating, newspapers, magazines and books were being published; plays and operas were being staged, concerts were being given all over the American Zone and in the American Sector of Berlin. But there was no film production.

According to the Information Services Manual, which is still, in substance, ICD's guiding basis of operation, in beginning film production there were two essential steps:

- a) All producers had to be licensed before they are to be permitted to produce any type of film, including religious and educational subjects.
- b) Two types of licenses were to be issued: Conditional and Standard. According to the Manual, "A Standard License will be granted after it has been determined that a Conditional Licensee has proved by his actions, cooperation and completed productions that he is the type of individual who can be trusted to produce films without pre-production scrutiny."

However, the real control of German film production was not so

(*) SHAEF-PWD — Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces - Psychological Warfare Division, was an Anglo-American-French set-up. In July, 1945, SHAEF was dissolved into its component parts, and PWD likewise was dissolved and reconstituted by each nation. PWD for the Americans became ICD; for the British BICD; and for the French GFCC Division Politique. The manual was the guide for the American operation. The British made changes to suit their particular needs. GFCC operated under other instructions.

much in what was produced or what kind of a script was being filmed, but in the following instructions in the Manual:

- a) Every feature production had to have a SHAEF (and now an ICD) Certificate.
- b) German producers were permitted to distribute their films only through registered, approved and controlled German distributors.

These, then, were the instructions which guided ICD film officers in their work. The Third Phase, as described in the Manual, and as it pertains to motion picture films, future German film production, began, in effect, during the last weeks of July, 1945, in Berlin and Munich. The revival of the German film industry was underway.



An early ICD report on the progress of German film revival said:

"Film production is inextricably interwoven with the re-information and regeneration of the German people. It is important to be circumspect about who makes these films, and who appears in them. It is important to control what these future films say. But above all it is important to let them express ideas."

The instruction in the manual was later expanded and rewritten by Davidson Taylor, Film-Theater-Music Chief for ICD, and signed by General Eisenhower as a directive.

Reports from the field because of Germany's chaos, and because of Army "channelling and channels" were not complete. There was no complete picture of what facilities were available, what personnel was available, what equipment and rawstock was at hand. Before German collapse, much studio equipment in Berlin and Munich had been packed and shipped into the interior to safeguard it from bombardment. Some of that material has not yet been located.

The absence of any quadripartite agreement on (1) German production policy, and (2) Germany-wide distribution policy, made discussion of future German film difficult. Regrettably, no solution has been reached on how will films produced, say, in the American Zone, be distributed in the Russian, British and French Zones. It is to the credit of the ICD operation that attempts to get this, as well as other film problems, settled were made as early as July, 1945, by ICD Film Officers in Berlin, in Baden-Baden, in Paris and in London.

What happens to Nazi-owned or formerly Nazi-controlled property? And the present income therefrom? This question was posed by

ICD before the Property Control Officer at Headquarters in Frankfurt and before Political Advisor Robert Murphy's office, and no answer was forthcoming.

And there were other stumbling blocks: Lack of film personnel on the ICD staff; lack of transportation; and the aggravating and confusing contradictions of the Potsdam Agreement in the film production field.

In spite of the essential vagueness of what ICD was trying to do, and in spite of the conflicts, shortages, and confusion, there were early efforts to get German film production started. Interviewing of applicants began in Munich and in Berlin, and to a limited extent at ICD Headquarters in Bad Homburg, during July and August of 1945. In general terms the following line was adopted by both Berlin and Munich Film Officers:

Can the individual (or group, if a group applies as a producing unit) pass the usual political reliability tests?

Does the individual (or group) have a practicable motion picture production program of features (or documentaries, or short subjects)?

Who are the financial backers of the individual or group?

Who are the creative artists and key technicians whom the group or individual plans to use?

How does the applicant propose to provide raw stock, building materials, and secure stage space?

Do the first one or two scripts of the applicant pass the critical tests of political acceptability, filmic importance, artistic merit and good taste?

The first German motion picture made under American control would have to be a great picture, not only for American prestige, but because Germans must be shown that with a new set of values and a new set of ideas they can produce pictures to equal and surpass the best that Goebbels and his Propaganda Ministry allowed. In their current thinking the Germans are as impressionable as children. They will inevitably compare what is done under American control with what was done under Nazi control. And the American ICD effort cannot afford to come off second best!

The problem of selecting politically acceptable men who would make the best pictures under the circumstances is a task now confronting ICD and Erich Pommer.

And back of it all was the ever-present guiding principle that films could be and must be used to re-inform and regenerate the German people. There have been some critics, notably Darryl Zanuck, who felt

that the penalty which the German film industry must pay for its malfeasance ought to be its plowing under along with the Wehrmacht, the General Staff and the Nazi Party. General Clay, Deputy Commander to General McNarney, answered that when he stated at a meeting of Information Control Officers that whereas the Germans through Goebbels had used their Information services as weapons of aggression, war and oppression, they must now be taught to use them as instruments of their own salvation.



In the year which followed the beginning of the ICD Film operation in Munich and in Berlin several hundred applicants had been interviewed. The rigid standards of political acceptability, professional experience and general qualifications which ICD set up, made wholesale rejections of most of the applicants mandatory and automatic. Of the hundreds who applied only ten men in all of Germany were found to have most of the necessary qualifications — and there is some doubt in one or two of these carefully selected cases.

During the course of this interrogation and interviewing several interesting facts about the German film industry came to light. The most tragic of these is that few if any of the applicants are under forty years of age. There was no younger group of men to compare with our own Garson Kanin, Orson Welles, Dore Schary, Sidney Buchman. It had been a hope of occupation officials of all four powers that some human material with which to rebuild Germany would be found in concentration camps, but in Berlin not one of the applicants who presented himself as a candidate for a license was a concentration camp victim. In the film world it was discovered, as the Berlin Tagesspiegel stated it, "The best in the German film industry either emigrated to other lands, or died in concentration camps. There is nothing, or almost nothing, left."

As of the first of October, about six applicants for a license had been interviewed, interrogated, screened and vetted through Bad Orb, United States Army Interrogation Center.

Of those found acceptable (there may be a few more at this writing), one is a former distribution chief for Metro, and was a man who refused to accept a similar post with UFA. At present he is assistant distribution chief for the American Film Exchange in Berlin. A second candidate was

one of Germany's most capable directors (*). A third is a small town banker and financier of independent film productions not under UFA control. A fourth is a Munich director of repute. A fifth is one of Germany's leading screen writers, and a man who had been forbidden to work in films or radio by the express orders of Goebbels. A sixth applicant was a former independent producer who refused to allow his organization to be swallowed by UFA and who also refused to make propaganda films of any kind. Other applicants who may have made the grade since include former screen writers, a director or two, and one or two specialists in making technical films, who now want to make educational subjects. This handful of men, a scant fifteen at the most, represent in the opinion of ICD what is left of the former German film industry, once Hollywood's chief competitor on the Continent and in South America.

By Hollywood standards one of the directors referred to might be entrusted to make important Hollywood pictures. The rest are strictly third- and fourth-rate film makers in terms of the best in Hollywood. One of them recognized the fact himself, and explained it as a result of eleven years of Nazi control, eleven years of the whims of Dr. Goebbels, eleven years of being dictated to by the actress with whom Goebbels happened to have been sleeping at the time, and eleven years without developing young, fresh talent.

It was the fond hope in the beginning of finding new men and new faces. Give the assistant directors, the writers, the cameramen a chance. Surely in an industry which turned out a hundred features a year almost until the end, there must have been talent in the ranks of production assistants, screen writers, assistant directors, production designers. But there was not. That is the simple, unalterable fact.

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In view of the foregoing it may seem strange that our Allies have had no similar difficulties in finding men to produce German motion pictures.

The French situation can be dismissed in a short paragraph. In their zone of Germany and in their sector of Berlin there are no facilities of

(*) It was this man who told me during one interview that it was not absolutely necessary to join the Party in order to keep one's position. He cited himself and Hans Albers as examples of prominent film people who had refused, in spite of coercion and intimidation, to join the Party, and whose careers were completely non-political from 1933 to the end.

any kind for making pictures, and no plants for the production of raw stock — positive or negative. Paris itself is hard-pressed to answer its own production needs, so that the likelihood of French studios relinquishing equipment and film for German production is very remote. In spite of this, a recent report states that licenses have been issued, and one in particular to a man we rejected almost immediately for reasons of his political past and his involvement in Berlin's black market.

The British also have limited production facilities. Early in their operation an attempt was made to make Hamburg a rival of Berlin in film production, a project since dropped because of a lack of materials. Nevertheless, during the early Fall of 1945 when it was learned that the British were prepared to start production before the Americans, who apparently were going about it very slowly, and even before the Russians, Hamburg became a mecca for an army of men and women, former UFA employees, most of them politically unacceptable. Kathi Diekhoff, for example, allegedly one of Goebbels' favorites, and a woman responsible for sending literally scores of Germans to concentration camps, an actress of limited talents and violent pro-Nazi stripe, had become the queen bee of Hamburg. As the Germans say, "Kathi ist wieder ganz gross geworden . . . (Kathi's a bigshot again . . .)," a phrase I heard in Berlin film circles many times, and big and little ones made tracks for Hamburg. It is also interesting to note that the German put in charge of the film synchronization plant and laboratory under British control in Berlin is a man who had held a similar job for the Propaganda Ministry.

The Russians were the most fortunate of all the Allies in film matters, for Babelsberg and Johanistal fell into their hands with their ten sound stages, scoring stages and laboratories, and what is equally important, Wolfen, the raw stock plant about fifty miles from Berlin. The Russians cleaned Babelsberg out down to the cement floor, even before Berlin became a Quadripartite city on July 4, 1945, which was all right with everyone except for the fact that more than fifty percent of the equipment they removed is still rusting and gathering dust in slaughter houses on the outskirts of Berlin. Little if any of the rest reached Moscow, as originally planned.

The Russians have issued several licenses. All licensees must operate under one combine — DEFA Films. The Russian program for future

German film production was outlined to German directors, producers and writers in an informal meeting held in the Adlon Hotel on November 30, 1945, and addressed by a Herr Wandel, German cultural affairs chief for the Russian Zone of Germany. Herr Wandel explained the set-up: production, distribution and exhibition were to come under one all-inclusive corporative organization. There was to be pre-production censorship. Themes and content would be suggested and recommended by his office, which in turn was controlled by Russian Col. Tulpanov, Military Government Officer in charge of Information services in the Russian Zone and in the Russian Sector of Berlin. This unified control which Herr Wandel proposed, and which has since become a reality, seems to be strangely reminiscent of the UFA monopolistic set-up.

Three of DEFA's production chiefs (there are other licensees) are men whom we rejected. One of the men was rejected because of what ICD considered a lack of sufficient experience. A second was rejected because he had once been in charge of the Luftwaffe film production program and, although not a Party member, it was reasoned that any man who had the confidence of the Wehrmacht, the Luftwaffe and the Party and was therefore politically reliable for them, could not be politically reliable for us. A third, an Austrian by birth, was a former member of the Austrian SA, and a man whose house had been used as a hideout by the SS during the days immediately before the Anschluss. ICD also considered him politically unreliable.

Among some of the others whom the Russians have licensed are the so-called Film Hasen (film hares), those men who must turn a camera no matter what the conditions and stipulations, who can serve a new master with the same zeal they exhibited in serving an old; men of little or no ideas, impelled and propelled only by the desire to shoot. Of the hundred or so who were interviewed in Berlin, about a third of them were the so-called Film Hasen who ran from us to the French to the British and to the Russians day after day, until in some instances they finally found a hutch in Herr Wandel's office.

The Russians are also producing films in Berlin for exhibition in Russia. At present there is an all-Russian cast and crew working at Johanistal on a Russian production. German raw stock and German building material is being used to make these films. This is a short-

sighted policy, not as an expression of sympathy for the Germans (God forbid!), but because it contradicts one of the basic tenets of the Potsdam Agreement. The Russian film feature referred to is one of an ambitious program of feature production.

The following in a Report from American Military Government Headquarters, throws some light on the American attitude toward this breach of the Potsdam Agreement:

"The declared purposes of the Potsdam Agreement (III, A, 3) do not include utilization of the present unsettled conditions in Germany to achieve a dominant economic position on the part of any of the occupying powers. One declared objective of the occupation is the restoration of local self-government throughout Germany on democratic principles (Potsdam III, A, 9 (i)), and another is the decentralization of the German economy (Potsdam III, b, 12). Question arises whether a foreign, state-owned film industry here contemplated, with the facilities inherent in motion pictures for propaganda, is consistent with the development among the Germans themselves of the self-reliance and free discussion which the Potsdam Agreement contemplates. A film industry under Russian-state ownership and sponsorship would tend to dominate the field of German film production and make it difficult for German owned and sponsored film producing companies to be formed or revived."

In the earliest days of the ICD film operation, it had been the hope of Film Chief Davidson Taylor and Gen. McClure, ICD chief, as well as the expressed hope of Wing Commander Willoughby, British Film chief, that German film production would be a Quadripartite matter, and that the future of German film production would be carefully and intelligently planned and guided by all four powers working together. Progress as far as ICD is concerned has been spectacularly slow, but the hope of re-information and regeneration through films has not diminished a whit. (*)

Erich Pommer has been in Germany since July. In addition to his problem of selecting the best men for licensing, he will have to supervise the physical rebuilding of a shattered Tempelhof Studio, and he will have to put into effect with the help of Morris Goodman, MPEA representative in Germany (Motion Picture Export Association, foreign sales branch of the MPA), an effective distribution system. He will have to face the necessity for Quadripartite agreement on film production and distribution, for it is inconceivable that any German-produced film can

(*) It is interesting to note that during a meeting between Fred Schwartz, film distribution chief for ICD, the writer, Berlin Film Officer, and Col. Fradkin, Russian chief of Sojuzintorgkino, distribution head for all Germany, the colonel made the following statement in answer to Schwartz's comment about using films for reeducating Germans: "You Americans must understand, Sojuzintorgkino is here in Germany to make money. That is our first objective."

earn back negative costs in only one of the four zones of German occupation.

And, yet, in spite of delays of all kinds, ICD's overall film operation has been a great success, a reflection of the honest zeal and application of ICD film men.

Four hundred and fifty theatres have been opened and are now operating in the American Zone and Sector of Berlin. Germans are seeing a carefully balanced program of feature (one of about sixty supplied by the American film industry, subtitled in Munich, with a few of them recently synchronized in Germany), OWI or ICD documentary, and two-reel newsreel, *Welt im Film*. There are four laboratories in Berlin and one in Munich working almost at capacity. A coating plant is turning out negative and positive at a rebuilt plant in Frankfurt-Hoechst. A major accomplishment, completed by Lt. Peter Van Eyck and Peter Herald in Berlin, Harry Satell in Frankfurt, and Sgt. Walter Klinger in Munich, has been the investigation of theatre-ownership titles and subsequent de-Nazification of all movie houses in Zone and Berlin Sector. (*)

Four film exchanges — in Frankfurt, Munich, Stuttgart and Berlin, — have earned over ten million marks for American film companies through exhibition of their features. ICD has led the other Allies in maintaining harmonious relations with the other three powers on all phases of film matters, and has always led the way in offering concrete, constructive proposals for the intelligent handling of film problems.

Only in the production field has progress been slow. But the reasons are not only understandable, they are in many respects commendable as well.

ICD has sought a Quadripartite agreement on production problems and on the eventual distribution of these future German-produced features. ICD has not permitted itself to get involved in a race to see who could get the first German-produced film on the screens of Germany.

(*) Our Allies, for inexplicable reasons, have not been very sharp on de-Nazification. The French appointed a former Party Member and notorious anti-Semite as their German distribution chief in Berlin. German distribution chief for the British in Berlin was also a Party member until he was removed as a result of a formal written protest by the American Berlin Film Officer. The Russians have de-Nazified in Berlin, and turned these theatres over to Sojuzintorgkino control. In the Russian Zone hinterlands, however, there has been no appreciable de-Nazification. When a Sojuzintorgkino representative (a Russian) went to Leipzig to throw a former Nazi out of his job as trustee for all Nazi theatres in the area, he (the Sojuzintorgkino representative) was taken into custody by the local commandant for interfering!

ICD has been careful, not over-careful, but intelligently careful in the selection of the right men to guide future German film production, for it was realized from the outset that the men who are selected in these early stages will be the future masters of the German film industry. ICD has been concerned with film quality, an ephemeral and nebulous factor, as any producer or writer or director in Hollywood will attest. These are the reasons why ICD has been "slow" in getting film production in its Zone and Berlin Sector started.

The American film operation, in the final analysis, in the opinion of the writer, is not only the most honest and sincere of all four Allied film operations; it offers the best hope for the building of a German film industry which Germans can use to make their country a democratic and respected nation.



SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD STUDIO CHAIRMEN

Following is a list of the newly elected studio lot SWG chairmen:

COLUMBIA — **Melvin Levy**; alternates: Ted Thomas, Ray Schrock.

MGM — **Irving Brecher**, **Chairman**; Sidney Boehm, Marvin Borowsky, Anne Chapin, Margaret Fitts, Charles Kaufman, Gladys Lehman.

REPUBLIC — **Franklin Adreon**; alternate, John K. Butler.

20th CENTURY-FOX — **Valentine Davies**; alternate, Wanda Tuchock.

WARNER BROS. — **Edwin Gilbert**; alternate, John Collier.

PARAMOUNT — **Arthur Sheekman**; alternate, Jesse Lasky, Jr.

UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL — **Silvia Richards**; alternates, Howard Dimsdale, Ian Hunter.

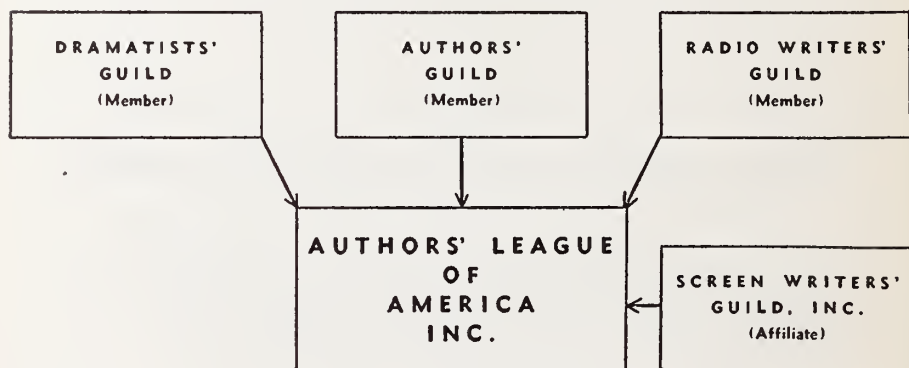
RKO — **Daniel Mainwaring**; alternate, Bess Taffel.

AUTHORS TO SCREEN WRITERS

A Guide to Common Action

ALBERT MALTZ

THE earliest organization of American writers was that of the authors. Their efforts at improving the economic bargaining position of writers laid the foundation for the Authors' League we know today with its several member and affiliate Guilds. The following chart illustrates the present day relationship of the various Guilds:



The Authors Guild, as an organizing and bargaining unit, embraces all writers who direct the written word toward a publishing channel, i.e., book or magazine. This Guild is the oldest and largest of all the Guilds, but it is not the strongest in bargaining power. It is an unfortunate fact, that must be publicly acknowledged as well as privately regretted, that in the last decade the Authors' Guild has served its mem-

ALBERT MALTZ, an active member of both the Authors' and Screen Writers' Guilds, has written such novels as *The Underground Stream* and *The Cross and the Arrow*. He is currently in Hollywood as a screen writer.

bers least effectively of all the Guilds. For this reason it has been subject to a great deal of criticism from authors, some within the Guild and some without. However, good or bad, moribund or militant, the Authors' Guild is a vitally important organization.

OFFICERS AND COUNCIL OF THE AUTHORS GUILD

CHRISTOPHER LaFARGE, President

FANNIE HURST, Vice President

RICHARD LOCKRIDGE, Secretary

LUISE M. SILLCOX, Executive Secretary

EVELYN F. BURKEY, Asst. Executive Secretary

FRANKLIN P. ADAMS

JOHN MASON BROWN

MIGNON G. EBERHART

FREDERICK LEWIS ALLEN

BEN LUCIEN BURMAN

WALTER D. EDMONDS

FAITH BALDWIN

CARL CARMER

CLIFTON FADIMAN

PAULINE BLOOM

ELMER DAVIS

HENRY PRATT FAIRCHILD

CECIL BROWN

R. L. DUFFUS

PAUL GALLICO

HELEN HULL

CARL SANDBURG

GLENWAY WESCOTT

MANUEL KOMROFF

OSCAR SCHISGALL

MARGARET WIDDEMER

MARGARET LEECH

REX T. STOUT

THYRA SAMTER WINSLOW

FRANCES LOCKRIDGE

DOROTHY THOMPSON

I. A. R. WYLIE

JOHN P. MARQUAND

JAMES THURBER

PHILIP WYLIE

Even if it did not have a spark of inner vitality (which is far from being true), it would be of key importance to all writers. The reason for this is simple, and a single illustration will suffice: screen writers by themselves can bargain salary questions with studios, but screen writers by themselves cannot achieve licensing of original material. For this reason, the screen writer requires the earnest and effective cooperation of the dramatists, the radio writers and, particularly, the authors. Those who write novels, magazine stories, mysteries, non-fiction books, sell a large proportion of all original material to the studios. Therefore, the existence of a strong guild of authors is a matter of urgency, not only for authors, but for all writers interested in improving the economic status of their craft.

The purpose of this article is to acquaint the screen writer with the nature of the Authors' Guild, with some of its broad problems, with its present activities — and, specifically, to enlist the aid of the screen writer, for his own sake, in building the strength of the Authors' Guild.

Why has the Authors' Guild been less effective than it should? There are many reasons, surely, but there is one key reason in my

opinion: the dispersal of authors over the entire extent of our nation. Screen writers are located in Hollywood; dramatists live in or around New York, or come to New York when their plays are produced; radio writers are to be found in the main in New York, Los Angeles (Hollywood) or Chicago. This means that the bulk of the writers in each of these fields is congregated in several large cities; it makes contact, education and, therefore, organization, relatively easy. But this is not true of authors. Authors live everywhere, they are not obliged to come to New York to have a book or story published; they are the most isolated and, therefore, the hardest to reach, educate and organize of all groups of writers.

For this reason the Authors' Guild, while the largest of all of the Guilds (because there are more authors writing for publication than there are screen writers or dramatists), nevertheless is the least successful of the Guilds when its actual membership is weighed against its potential membership. This fact has affected its bargaining power. It also has affected the psychology of its leadership. Responsible leaders of a guild or union do not willingly enter into actions that bear no promise of success. In contemplating serious action committing its membership, the Guild leadership has always faced a spectre: that over the extent of the country there were an unknown number of authors who, in their isolation, ignorance, short-sightedness and human cupidity, might use the opportunities of a Guild boycott to sell THEIR material to the publishers.

Within this set of facts and fears, the Guild for over a decade was caught in a vicious circle not of its own choice: it was afraid to bargain militantly without a larger membership; it could not materially increase its membership so long as it did not achieve bargaining successes for authors. The result was a kind of semi-paralysis.

It would be highly inaccurate to say that during this period there was no activity. Each successive administration, to my best knowledge, tried to achieve benefits for authors. But the vicious circle seemed too powerful. And so, even though the Guild lobbied against bad copyright bills, used persuasion on individual editors to correct abuses, sometimes successfully, helped its members on contractual problems or in agent relations, gave much time and attention to the organization of the Screen

Writers' Guild and the Radio Writers' Guild — nevertheless it did little to correct those fundamental abuses suffered by authors which can never be corrected except in a head-on fashion.

Today, as ten years ago, novelists need a standard book contract, a fair contract, and the same contract for all. (The dramatists have had this for over twenty years.) The writers of juvenile books, of trade and educational books, equally need contracts. The complex magazine field, in which authors suffer a hundred abuses, needs contracts, codes of practice, consistency of dealing. These problems are as acute as they are chronic. They must be solved. The Authors' Guild will not be worthy of its name until it solves them.

This, very briefly, is an index to the history, problems and nature of the Authors' Guild — a guild, I repeat again, whose strength is important, not only to authors, but to screen writers.

What is the picture for the Guild today? With considerable satisfaction, I can answer that there is new life, new activity and new hope in the organization. I wish neither to exaggerate nor underestimate. The Guild and its leadership are still the target of much criticism. This is inevitable. Until the basic problems of authors are solved, the Guild will receive some measure of criticism, and should. An organization exists to serve its members in the solution of their problems; it is no one's private property, and criticism should be its life-blood — provided that the criticism is constructive and that it comes from those who are willing to join up and work.

The Guild is in motion today as never before, and it is making concrete progress. Its membership is more aroused and more active, it is growing in size, it is initiating and beginning to carry out vital and basic activities. Most important, it is in process of breaking the vicious circle of the past years. It is doing so in the following manner:

- 1) The Council of the Guild decided to establish regional committees in a number of large cities. The existence of functioning committees in Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, New Orleans, etc., will mean that writers in and around those areas can be reached, educated and enlisted into membership. This will mean in turn that campaigns initiated by the Council in New York can be backed up in decisive areas all over the nation. It is not necessary that

every last author in the United States be a member of the Guild to guarantee effective action; it IS important, however, that Guild membership not be confined to one area in the main. The Regional Committees are a method of correcting that. The Guild Committee in Los Angeles, established in August of this year, has already shown considerable progress. It has brought together authors who previously were isolated members of the Guild; it has brought into membership authors who had never joined or had never even heard of the Guild; it has created in two months an organizing center for authors that is already almost 400 strong, is growing stronger, is establishing craft groups, supporting present national campaigns, and is capable of giving support to future campaigns when they are initiated. If this situation is duplicated by the authors who live in and around Boston, Philadelphia, New Orleans and half a dozen other cities, the organizational end of the vicious circle will have been broken. That process is already under way.

2) The Guild leadership is beginning to parallel this activity at the bottom by its own activity at the top — each having an intimate bearing upon the other, each depending upon and fertilizing the other. This leadership activity began to take its most public form under the last Guild administration in a campaign for an upward revision of royalties paid to authors in the reprint book field. That campaign has been carried on by the present Council and the current president, Christopher LaFarge. At this time, the campaign shapes up as follows: the Guild leadership has maintained that publishing costs in the reprint field should permit an author to receive, not 1/2 cent a copy, the present rate on a 25-cent book, but 3 cents. On a Pocket Book sale of 150,000 copies this is the difference between \$750.00 and \$4,500.00 for the author. The publishers with unanimity denounced the Guild's figures as grossly inaccurate. They may be right, I wouldn't myself know. I do know, however, that their denunciations have not been accompanied by counter figures.

Faced by the intransigence of the publishers, the Guild Council took the first step toward showdown action. It began the circulation of a reprint pledge. Writers all over the country are now being lined up to prepare to demand certain reprint clauses in common in their book con-

tracts — at such time as the Guild Council orders this action put into effect.

This pledge has been received exceedingly well by authors. Hundreds have already signed. But more still must sign against the possibility that negotiation will not achieve results, and that an action against publishers must be called. Meanwhile, however, negotiations have been proceeding. Most recently a considerable advance was made: the publisher of Pocket Books agreed to open his financial records to Guild inspection. By this means the Guild charges against the publishers can be checked. If the Guild figures are incorrect, they will be revised. If not — then we will see what the next step must be.

The screen writer comes in right here. This is a Guild fight for authors, which in itself will not benefit screen writers who do not plan to write books. Yet, since it is a campaign that is of interest and concern to authors, it is material that informed screen writers can use to educate author friends into Guild membership. If your neighbor, tennis partner or old college friend is now an author, he should be in the Guild. If he is not a member, you as a screen writer will find it extremely easy to educate him into Authors' Guild membership provided you see its urgency for the future strength of your own Guild, and provided you know a few facts and figures of the sort presented here.

Even more basic than the fight for an increase in reprint royalties, is the campaign for standard book contracts. The next issue of the Authors' League Bulletin will contain a suggested minimum basic contract for books. This suggested contract is the result of a vast amount of preparatory work of the best and most solid kind. No one in the Guild dreamed this contract up without thought to publishing realities. On the contrary, before the contract was drafted a committee of the Authors' Guild, headed by Richard Lockridge, Frederick Lewis Allen, Fannie Hurst and Christopher LaFarge, analyzed over two hundred current authors' contracts. The proposed contract, therefore, is based on realities; it has been drafted to correct real abuses; it proposes standards that have been deeply pondered.

This contract is a banner around which hundreds of non-Guild authors will rally — provided they are acquainted with it. Authors know with bitterness and resentment that often a reputable publisher will

have two, three or four "standard" contracts which he offers variably to different authors, depending upon their bargaining position. Two novelists within the same publishing house may have vastly different contracts, one giving the publisher a share of all his subsidiary rights, the other retaining them to his own benefit. This is unfair. The correction of such abuses is possible very quickly, provided authors get behind the proposed Guild contract. They will get behind it if someone tells them about the Guild, if someone asks them to compare THEIR contracts with the contract proposed by the Guild. That intermediary "someone" can be a screen writer as well as another author.

I don't have the space to discuss other current Guild activities: the work toward a juvenile book contract, the campaign to substitute a royalty for a flat fee in the reprint of short stories in anthologies, the work of the pulp writer section, etc.

The purpose of this article will be sufficiently served if screen writers who read it will become clear on the nature of the Authors' Guild and its activities, and turn into recruiting agents for it. A strong Authors' Guild will cooperate with all of the other Guilds in achieving the licensing of original material to films, in effecting separation of rights, in guaranteeing that if screen writers ever decide to strike for THEIR needs, they will be backed up by the nation's authors instead of losing their jobs to author scabs. But a weak Authors' Guild will guarantee none of these things.

One final caution: a reality of the present situation amongst authors makes it likely that screen writers who try to organize for the Guild will meet not only ignorance and indifference, which can speedily be overcome by education and information, but varying degrees of hostility. This hostility cannot be overcome by a wholesale defense of Guild errors or inactivity in the past, or its failure to provide adequate services to given individuals. Such hostility must be met by a reality: that authors can improve their contracts and economic position only through the present Guild, and that there is sound basis for believing that the Guild of today is not the Guild of five years ago, that it has come alive, that it is on the march.

No one can guarantee what the future achievements of the Guild will be. Personally, I would not attempt to "sell" Guild membership on

the basis of easy assurances. The future of the Guild depends first upon the activity and the alert concern of its members. That is up to each author as an individual. It is dependent secondly upon the quality of the Guild leadership. If the leadership is too rash or too timid, if it blunders or stews, if it makes motions and does nothing active, then it will not be a good leadership. Because of the dispersal of membership, the Guild as an organization is particularly dependent upon leadership. But any membership attitude that looks backward at Guild history, instead of forward, will be wrong and useless, and equally useless will be nihilistic attacks upon leadership because chronic abuses are not being corrected overnight.

The record can be kept, achievements weighed, people called to account. The officers and Council members listed on page 35 did not take office for the nonexistent salary involved. They took office as authors to help themselves and other authors. Their activities deserve full support; their errors, if they make them, deserve criticism; I know they would not have it otherwise.

Finally, the basis for all future Guild achievement will be a large, informed membership. The screen writer can play an effective role in bringing this to pass. Get your author friends to join the L. A. Committee of the Authors' Guild. Get busy on it now!

★ ★ ★

DRAMATISTS VS. WASHINGTON DISCRIMINATION

Thirty-three leading dramatists, all members of the Dramatists' Guild, and many of them also SWG members, have taken a stand against the continuation of racial discrimination, or Jim-Crowism, in Washington, D. C., theatres. All have agreed to boycott the capital legitimate theatres, the National and Lisner Auditorium, following Ingrid Bergman's protest against barring of Negroes from her performances in Maxwell Anderson's play, *Joan of Lorraine*, during its Washington run.

The playwrights involved are: George Abbott, Anderson, Philip Barry, Irving Berlin, Edward Carpenter, Edward Chodorov, Jerome Chodorov, Marc Connelly, Owen Davis, Arnaud D'Usseau, Dorothy Fields, Herbert Fields, Ira Gershwin, Ruth Gordon, Morton Gould, James Gow, Paul Green, Oscar Hammerstein, Moss Hart, Ben Hecht, Lillian Hellman, Garson Kanin, Anita Loos, Charles MacArthur, Elliott Nugent, John O'Hara, John Patrick, Elmer Rice, Richard Rodgers, Robert E. Sherwood, John Van Druten, Kurt Weill and Tennessee Williams.

★ ★ ★



SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD, INC.

1655 NO. CHEROKEE AVE., HOLLYWOOD 28, CALIFORNIA
AFFILIATED WITH AUTHORS' LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.

E D I T O R I A L

THE 743 votes cast in our recent annual election made it the most notable in our Guild's history. Incomparably greater than the turnout at any of our eleven previous elections, it indicates that the membership is awake to the industry issues, with their potentialities of progress and peril, and fully prepared to make a plan and fight for it.

The Executive Board which has come into being through this record participation — approximately 75% of our total voting membership — therefore feels that it is no minority expression, but a genuine cross-section of the entire Guild. So the membership has no excuse if unity is not present, nor any honest motive for not abiding by majority decisions. Furthermore we hope that the large attendance at the election meeting, with its salutary open discussions, will not be an exception, but means that whenever we meet, we will meet in large numbers, to ensure decisions arrived at by the meeting of many minds.

The new Board inherits a labor crisis which changes and grows sharper every moment. Methods must be found to steer the Guild safely through the coming year. There are some who think we should keep clear of it, avoid obligations and strengthen our ties with the Authors' League; others believe this is not sufficient and that we need the additional strength of union allies. Both points of view are present; both

must be honestly considered and both be prepared to adjust themselves to the unforeseen.

Although we are cognizant of the need for flexibility, one thing remains constant: in a little over two years, our basic contract expires and all the above must be viewed in the light of helping us get a new and better one. Even while waiting for the termination-date, certain things may be negotiated. Our present contract specifies a weekly minimum wage (which most of us consider too low), Guild adjudication of credit disputes, a 90% Guild shop and other items of value, but it is nowhere near our due. A genuine economic program for writers must be formulated and presented; it is already being prepared by a Board committee. It is recognized that the Guild will be strong enough to achieve an American Authors' Authority, which we want with practical unanimity, only if the Guild obtains economic benefits for its members which will make them stick to the Guild in an emergency. We have many gradations of earning power, and the two extremes must find a way of working for each other and thereby for themselves. A.A.A. plus economic benefits as employees to be such a program.

But regardless of anything done or planned, if the Wagner Act, by which the Guild became strong, is repealed, we shall have all our difficulties multiplied. A company union would be only one of our many troubles. Preparing against this possibility, a legislative group will be an absolute necessity, urging and pressing Congressmen to support our interests, and presenting to the membership various methods by which this may best be done. Philip Dunne discusses the subject in the present issue of this magazine.

Unfinished business of last year includes the industry's unpaid debt to writer-veterans, the proper classification of writer-producers, the adoption of a new constitution, and the continuation of our building scheme.

The projects in work for the coming year obviously leave little time, and the results of the election no reason for dissension.

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S . W . G . B U L L E T I N

At the November 13th membership meeting which set a new SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD RECORD of 743 votes cast, the new Executive Board was elected and has taken over administration of Guild affairs. Personnel of the new Board is:

President

Emmet Lavery

1st V.P. — Mary McCall, Jr.

3rd V.P. — Hugo Butler

2nd V.P. — Howard Estabrook

Secretary — F. Hugh Herbert

Treasurer — Harold Buchman

Executive Board:

The above officers and —

Melville Baker
James M. Cain
Lester Cole

Philip Dunne
Talbot Jennings
Ring Lardner, Jr.

Ranald MacDougall
George Seaton
Leo Townsend

Alternates:

Maurice Rapf
Gordon Kahn

Isobel Lennart
Valentine Davies

Henry Myers
David Hertz

SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD CREDIT ARBITRATION PANEL

November 13, 1946 to November 12, 1947

Following is the personnel of the new Credit Arbitration Panel as appointed at the SWG general membership meeting of November 13. Each member of this panel has had previous experience on two or more arbitration committees.

Robert Andrews
Leopold Atlas
Graham Baker
Ben Barzman
A. I. Bezzerides
Michael Blankfort
DeWitt Bodeen
Marvin Borowsky
Mortimer Braus
Elizabeth Burbridge
Will R. Burnett
Hugo Butler
Frank Cavett
Harry Clork
Olive Cooper
Walter DeLeon
I.A.L. Diamond
Howard Dimsdale

Robert Ellis
Guy Endore
Melvin Frank
Anne Froelich
Everett Freeman
Frank Gabrielson
Paul Gangelin
Erwin Gelsey
Doris Gilbert
Frances Goodrich
Howard J. Green
Margaret Gruen
Albert Hackett
Robert Harari
Edmund Hartmann
Jack Henley
F. Hugh Herbert
James Hill

Lionel Houser
Cyril Hume
Dick Irving Hyland
Polly James
Paul Jarrico
Talbot Jennings
Frederick Kohner
Milton Krims
Harry Kurnitz
Jesse Lasky, Jr.
S. K. Lauren
Connie Lee
Leonard Lee
Robert Lees
Gladys Lehman
Melvin Levy
Herbert Clyde Lewis
Lee Loeb
Helen Logan
Stephen Longstreet
William Ludwig
Dane Lussier
Richard Macaulay
Ranald MacDougall

Al Mannheimer
Horace McCoy
Bertram Millhauser
Jack Natteford
E. E. Paramore
Marion Parsonnet
Frank Partos
Allen Rivkin
Marguerite Roberts
Waldo Salt
Oscar Saul
Mel Shavelson
Arthur Sheekman
Lynn Starling
Francis Swann
Jo Swerling
Leo Townsend
Wanda Tuchock
Catherine Turney
Luci Ward
M. Coates Webster
Hugh Wedlock
Brenda Weisberg
Paul Wellman

I. A. T. S. E. Jurisdiction: Following is a resolution adopted by membership vote at the Nov. 13 meeting, and re-worded by the Executive Board at membership's request:

WHEREAS, the international leadership of the I.A.T.S.E. has, over a period of at least nine years, announced its claim to jurisdiction over the entire motion picture industry, and

WHEREAS the substitution of Richard Walsh and Roy Brewer for George Browne and William Bioff in that leadership has apparently not altered that claim as evidenced by such recent newspaper statements as the following quotation from a signed article in the Hollywood Citizen News for September 28, 1946:

"Walsh . . . yesterday called on film leader Eric Johnston to take steps to eliminate 'forever' jurisdictional disputes in Hollywood. Walsh emphasized to Johnston that 'the I. A. T. S. E. should be given complete jurisdiction in the studios.'"

AND WHEREAS the motion picture producers have demonstrated during the same period, in disputes which have arisen between the IATSE and other groups, a consistent policy of favoring the position of the IATSE to a degree which appears to indicate at least an amicable collaboration between the IATSE and the producers —

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED That the Screen Writers' Guild condemns the claim of the IATSE to jurisdiction over the motion picture industry and will vigorously resist and oppose any move of the IATSE or any other group which would jeopardize the autonomy of the Screen Writers' Guild —

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the Screen Writers' Guild calls upon the Association of Motion Picture Producers, Inc. and its President, Eric Johnston, to make clear its attitude toward the claim of the IATSE to jurisdiction over the employee groups in the motion picture industry and specifically, if Mr.

Walsh did make such representation to Mr. Johnston as reported in the newspaper quotation above, that Mr. Johnston make a public reply to Mr. Walsh's suggestion.

★ ★ ★

Credits: The following action relating to credits was approved by the general membership meeting November 13:

1. That the rule pertaining to waivers for producers claiming credit be amended to read: "In the event the producer follows other writers on a script, he shall not receive credit unless there are exceptional circumstances and then only at the discretion of the Arbitration Committee."

2. That since it is understood that the importance and dignity of screen credits must be maintained at all times, now therefore be it resolved that unless a writer uses a recognized pseudonym he must use his own name when entitled to screen play credit and does not choose to withdraw unless the intention to establish a pseudonym is bona fide.

★ ★ ★

\$10,000 Appropriation: By a vote of 366 to 260, the SWG membership meeting of Nov. 13 defeated a resolution to appropriate from the Guild treasury \$10,000 for Film Technicians Local 683. It was proposed to use this sum, or any other substantial sum directed by the membership, to assist the local union in its struggle against the present administration of the I.A.T.S.E. International.

★ ★ ★

Action on Labor Disputes: The SWG membership went on record Nov. 13 in favor of the following measures concerning the Hollywood labor situation:

1. That arbitration machinery be set up as quickly as possible for the settlement of all jurisdictional disputes;

2. That the principle contracts must be agreed upon and enforced or recognized;

3. That all workers on strike must

be taken back without discrimination;

4. That the Guild send a request to the Costumers to reconvene the meeting of representatives of guilds and unions to discuss what can be done to achieve a settlement upon this basis.

★ ★ ★

No Scabbing on Story Analysts: SWG has taken emphatic action to discourage any of its members from doing work that could be interpreted as scabbing on the Screen Story Analysts' Guild. The SSAG has informed SWG of a report that literary agencies were farming out material to free-lance writers for synopsisizing. In response SWG has assured the SSAG of its cooperation in this matter, and has gone on record to the effect that names of members found to have done the work of story analysts during the strike period will be brought to the Guild's attention.

★ ★ ★

\$2500 For Herald-Express Lockout Victims: The SWG membership voted Nov. 13 to give \$2,500 to Los Angeles Newspaper Guild fund for the 525 newspaper people who struggled for fair wages from Hearst's Herald-Express.

The following letter has been received from the Los Angeles Newspaper Guild:

November 20, 1946.

Dear Sirs and Brothers:

The adoption by your organization of your fine resolution in support of the struggle of 525 members of the Los Angeles Newspaper Guild for fair wages at the Herald-Express, and the appropriation at your last general membership meeting of \$2,500 to help us carry on our fight helped us immeasurably.

The Herald-Express unit of the Los Angeles Newspaper Guild today adopted the following resolution:

"Be it resolved that the 525 Newspaper Guild members locked out of their jobs at the Herald-

Express by the Hearst management do thank the Executive Board and members of the Screen Writers' Guild for their organizational and financial support during a critical time of the Newspaper Guild's efforts to achieve fair wages for Los Angeles newspaper men and women."

With fraternal thanks,

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) GEO. E. HUTCHINSON,
President, Los Angeles Newspaper Guild, Local No. 69,
American Newspaper Guild.

★ ★ ★

Wm. Pomerance Resigns: M. W. Pomerance, Executive Secretary of the Screen Writers' Guild since 1944, resigned from that post Nov. 26. No successor had yet been announced, prior to The Screen Writer's deadline.

In resigning, Pomerance issued the following statement:

"It is with great regret that I ask the Executive Board of the Screen Writers' Guild to accept my resignation as Executive Secretary as of this date. I have enjoyed working with the officers, Executive Board and members of the Guild and hope to be able to continue my cordial relations with them. But I have been asked to do a job which seems to me to have such importance and urgency that I cannot refuse it. And since the work I wish to undertake is with the Conference of Studio Unions and since it is my earnest belief that the continued strength of that group has a real and vital significance to the Screen Writers' Guild, I am confident that the Executive Board will give understanding consideration to the reasons which compel my request and to the immediacy with which I ask that it be granted."

"M. W. Pomerance."

A. A. A. PRESS SURVEY

Following is a continuation of national press comment on the American Authors' Authority. Much of it is obviously based on misinformation or on distortions resulting from the policies and pressures of individual publications.

Columbus (O.) Dispatch, October 3, 1946:

Controversy continues over the proposal for the establishment, by federal law, of an "American Authors' Authority," the function of which would be to exercise control over the publication and copyrighting of all literary material in the United States

. . . This fact that there is no outcry from the rank and file of American writers . . . and that even so liberal a publication as the Saturday Review condemns it in vigorous terms seems ample basis for the suggestion that since it is their brain-child, why not let the screen and radio geniuses keep it for their own? Let them dicker with their bosses through some such organization as the Screen Writers' Guild which is already set up as a going concern. If it isn't getting results maybe one of Mr. Cain's "tough muggs" at its head might be able to do a better job.

Because they aren't satisfied with the terms on which they are paid for the output of their high-priced imaginations seems no good reason for putting a whole nation's creative artists in a Soviet-style strait-jacket, which is what their plan boils down to.

John O'Connor - Florida Catholic, Oct. 4, 1946:

Are the publishers and editors of a country still free going to pass unnoticed this Moscow-mothered and Hollywood harbored scheme for an "American Authors' Authority"?

Are the bonds of intellectual, literary and economic slavery to be hammered out for the writers in this free country by a small group whose intentions threaten free speech in a country that has always had freedom of opinion?

. . . . The Hollywood people who are behind this . . . are playing with moral

and political fire. . . . they are driving to organize writers and that drive threatens the writer's freedom of expression. . . .

. . . To dismiss the charge that it is Communist as lightly as did the playwright Elmer Rice a few days ago, is to avoid the real issue. . . . I would be against this guild issue no matter what source it came from.

Syndicated Editorial by James Thresher - N.E.A., Oct. 11:

A literary organization as hard-boiled as some of his literary characters is the new creation of James M. Cain . . . it seems designed to be a closed-shop clearing house for magazine, screen and radio writers.

. . . The Cain plan is obviously inspired by ASCAP. . . .

. . . ASCAP came into being largely to protect song writers who formerly had to sell all rights to their work for whatever a publisher might offer them. . . . Cain's AAA is something else again. Magazine and, in all but exceptional cases, radio writing is a one-shot proposition . . . and that's the end of it. Motion picture profits, of course, come from repeated sales. But the screen writers don't work for peanuts, any more than the actors do.

. . . The point is that Cain is asking writers to adopt a plan by which their writings could be suppressed by the AAA for any reason. . . . So, though Cain may be promising to get the writers more money, it is clear that they stand to lose more than they gain. The AAA plan is a potential blow at independent writing and a free press. We believe that this is a Triple-A which might well be plowed under.

Kansas City Star, Oct. 13:

Mrs. Alma Robison Higbee, president of the National League of American Penwomen, officially declared war on the proposed American Authors Authority which she charges is aimed at literary dictatorship in the U. S.

"I've waited all my life for this," Mrs. Higbee announces emphatically, referring to her impending crusade. "I've seen the danger creeping up all along, but now it

has crystallized, and as president of the Penwomen, I have an organization behind me to fight it."

Catholic Universe Bulletin, Oct. 18, 1946:

... We can think of no proposal more fraught with danger to our free American Institutions than this. This Authority would create a monopoly of literary expression that could only lead to disaster.

The publication airing these poisonous views is the organ of the Screen Writers' Guild which has a distinctly leftist tinge.

New York Times, Oct. 21, 1946:

The literary world's war of words over the American Authors' Authority proposed by novelist James M. Cain produced a bitter denunciation of the plan yesterday by Dorothy Thompson and a spirited defense by Mr. Cain.

Miss Thompson bolstered her attack on the authority as a "racket" with allusions from Shakespeare and the Bible and to the late Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels and James C. Petrillo. . . .

Mr. Cain . . . seasoned his defense of the plan with references to Giuseppe Verdi, George Bernard Shaw and William Saroyan.

Miss Thompson conceded that writers were suffering from financial abuses, but she added:

... worse than a menace of "usurpation" of copyrights by a central body, was a threat that all writers would be coerced into joining the authority by boycotts of the organized writers against publishers or producers who take the work of the unorganized. This, she said, smacked of the way Goebbels forced all German writers into a single organization that throttled their freedom without holding copyrights.

She asserted that the money collected by the authority . . . would be used to put pressure on legislators. . . .

... In his broadcast, Cain said that his opponents were sincere in their anxieties, but that he hoped to dispel their fears.

"Writers fear this thing," he said,

"Because it is new, as people once feared banks and lightning rods and surgery. When you get sick enough, you get operated on whether you're afraid of surgery or not."

... The novelist declared those planning the authority were doing everything possible to forestall the possibility that it would have any powers over the contents of any piece of writing. He said it was "natural but silly" for writers to balk at assigning their copyrights to such an agency. Asked if he thought William Saroyan, for example, should be willing to give up his copyright for *The Time of Your Life*, Mr. Cain said that Mr. Saroyan did not even hold that copyright; it belongs instead to a publisher who would not have it if the authority were in operation.

N. Y. Times, Oct. 22, 1946:

James M. Cain, . . . assailed last night the "present hierarchy" of the Authors League, whose leaders he accused of having determined that the membership should not learn full details of his proposed American Authors Authority. . . .

... "It is these reactionary, almost incomprehensibly censorious writers, some of them in this so-called American Writers Association, others of them a clique which runs the Authors Guild and the Authors League, who are guilty of a monstrous campaign against the right of a writer to say what he thinks," Mr. Cain said.

Likewise, he added, it is equally important to hear what another writer thinks, "to exploit it for his own benefit, to own his own soul."

Mr. Cain told writers at a meeting . . . that his plan involved an effort to enforce an authors' right under his copyright, to give him a chance for better exploitation of his work. He ridiculed the report that it was "the deep, devious, communist plot you are asked to believe in."

"The plan deals with property," he asserted. "It is property, not commu-

nism, which is the plutonium of this idea."

He declared that "it was property which threw the picture studios into paroxysms of excitement," over the projected authority.

"You cannot set up this authority as your counsel and hold onto your copyrights," he asserted. "The law does not permit a corporation to act as counsel. It permits a corporation, however, to act as trustee, and it is as your trustee that we propose to set this authority up."

The authority is not interested in what authors say in their writings, he declared, but in what they get paid for saying it.

... The authority, he held, would not cern itself with deals, markets, prices, wages or working conditions, but with the enforcement of authors' rights to their properties.

N. Y. Sun, Oct. 22, 1945:

With an occasional fiery fling against the Authors League of America, James M. Cain last night described his plan for an American Authors Authority at a meeting sponsored by the Action Committee of the Authors Guild.

Six hundred authors attended the meeting of which Carl Carmer was chairman. The Cain plan has been under attack as Communist-inspired, but Carmer pointed out that he was an "up-state Republican" and that Emmett Lavery, president of the Screen Writers Guild, was a Roman Catholic. Cain himself had a check to show that he had contributed to the Republican party.

Milton Luban - Hollywood Press Times, Oct. 22, 1946:

It is interesting to read the press comments on AAA by the various newspapers throughout the country and note the identity of language.

Almost all use the word "czar" in their headlines and unanimously they denounce the proposed Authority as dictatorship, censorship, communistic, czarist and just plain lousy. The Hearst papers — the same ones campaigning so vigorously for the suppression of "The Memoirs of Hecate County" are particularly worried

about the alleged censorship. Hearst is all for freedom of expression and the fact that his other hand is busy stifling it, is none of your business.

Virginia Wright - Los Angeles Daily News, Oct. 24:

The pattern of opposition to the American Authors Authority could have been outlined in advance, I imagine, by James Cain, originator of the plan.

Like all progressive, protective plans the charges against it of leftism, dictatorship, regimentation and totalitarianism were inevitable. And in Hollywood, where any effort of writers to strengthen themselves automatically is labelled a Communist plot, studio resistance was to be expected.

But while the hysteria gathers in the usual quarters against this proposal to set up a "repository of copyrights" at least one producing organization takes a stand on the side of the writers. This is the comparatively new company headed by the King Bros.

... Frank King, speaking for his brothers, admits their attitude toward writers is not entirely unselfish. "If we have good scripts, we can get names," is the way he puts it, "and if a writer feels he is in partnership with the producer then his incentive to do good work should be increased.

"Furthermore, if a writer puts out a good job he should do so knowing that as long as it is good for reissues and re-makes he, like the producing company, will continue to be re-imbursed."

Brooklyn Eagle, Oct. 24, 1946:

Was it the illness and temporary absence of Mayor O'Dwyer that tempted the Municipal Radio Station management to permit the most recent exemplification of American Communism to make use of its microphones last Sunday?

On Sunday, James M. Cain, a novelist who has been bitten by the Hollywood radical bug, was "interviewed" in the studio on the subject of the domination of American literature by the "little brain trust" which has cheapened the output of American writers since all the "isms"

of the old world began their Walpurgian dance in the brains of the Hollywood Screen and Radio Writers Guilds. Comrade Cain's proposition which he has been promoting for some time, is the establishment of an "authority which would control the publication of fiction and other products of American authors by taking charge of their copyrights and establishing a boycott of publishers who accepted copy from non-members.

. . . Mr. Cain has modified his plan—or sugar-coated it—since his "tough mug" manifesto, but it looks like another Red racket to most reputable American writers, and a radio station paid for at public expense is no place for its exploitation.

N. Y. Times, October 27, 1946:

Since Homer smote his lyre, authors have been crabbed folk, fighting at the drop of a syllable . . . the pattern is well worn.

Last week in New York another literary battle raged

. . . Between 7,000 and 8,000 Americans live by creative writing. Some trade practices in book and magazine publishing leave them often without control of various rights over their writings, and otherwise restrict them. An author generally gets no compensation for refilmings of a story once sold. (Mr. Cain said that on three of his filmed novels he made \$45,000, the producers \$12,000,000.)

There is wide agreement among authors over the grievances, wide disagreement over the cure.

Film Daily, Oct. 29, 1946:

Byron Price, vice-president of MPAA, who assailed "thought control" angles of the Cain Plan at the recent NAB convention in Chicago, has been invited by Emmett Lavery, president of the Screen Writers Guild, to publicly debate the issue. The telegraphed invitation pointed out the SWG at the first meeting on the plan unanimously voted a special guarantee as to freedom of thought in all scripts to be handled by it.

The wire went on: "I ask you now, in justice to the whole industry and to the Screen Writers' Guild, to give both sides of the story to the public without delay."

Hollywood Reporter, Oct. 29:

The following telegram was sent yesterday to Emmet Lavery, president of the Screen Writers Guild by Byron Price, chairman of the board of the AMPP, in answer to a previous wire from Lavery:

"In my brief Chicago reference to the Authors' Authority project I made no pretense of telling the whole story in detail. However, I disagree completely with your suggestion that as a reporter I omitted any pertinent fact."

The New Yorker, Nov. 2nd, 1946:

THE MUSE AND THE MUG

(Under James M. Cain's proposed authority, writers will have their business affairs handled for them by a "tough mug")

Come, Goddess, thou who guards my song,

From whom I'm never distant,
Muse, meet Mug, who'll right my wrong;

Meet Mug, my new assistant.

Come, Muse, and drive my laggard pen!

Come, Mug, and drive my bargain!

To star and to Authority
I'll hitch my creaky wagon.

Sweet Muse, Tough Mug, profitable pair,

Gaudier soon my raiment;

Muse shall inspire me with the thought,

Mug will collect the payment.

O happy time, O perfect end,

O prospect most inviting!

I think I need just one more friend—
To do the actual writing.

— E.B.W.

(Permission The New Yorker Copyright
The F. R. Publishing Corporation).

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C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

The following letter has been received from SWG member Martin Field:

May I call to your attention what I consider to be a danger signal to all writers?

I refer to the December issue of Magazine Digest, in which not a single article carries the author's name inside the magazine. About 95% of the articles are reprints from other magazines. The back cover carries only the name of the magazine from which the piece was reprinted — NOT the name of the author who wrote the original article. It is bad enough for writers to be "close-shaved" on reprint money, but now they are being beheaded entirely when it comes to the reprint byline. And in those few cases where writers do get a byline on the back cover of the December issue of Magazine Digest, their names do NOT appear inside the magazine on the article itself.

This "new editorial policy" of Magazine Digest could set a dangerous precedent of ignoring the writer so completely that writers would soon be pleading merely for bylines instead of for more money and better terms. And while at present this situation would seem to concern magazine writers only, it could well be the opening gun in a general campaign to minimize the writer's importance in all fields, including the screen.

Chalk up another reason for a strong AAA!

SWG member Henry Myers has sent the following communication to The Screen Writer:

Lest any of my friends think I have gone out of my mind, I should like to comment on a piece of idiocy which W. R. Wilkerson has invented for his Hollywood Reporter. He calls it "the Myers plan" and says I proposed it at our recent Electioneering Meeting. According to Wilkerson I advocated that writers be graded and paid via certain tests, among which would be familiarity with the Greek classics and with Lawson's book on playwrighting.

Well of course the 328 Guild members who heard my brief address, which was an electioneering speech on my own behalf, know that I never mentioned anything faintly resembling this Wilkerson fantasy. In fact, I never heard of the "plan" until it appeared in The Reporter.

Why then is such nonsense concocted and attributed to me? The lie itself is not important, because it happens to be such a silly lie; but the reason for it should be examined. To me the explanation is clear and, unlike the lie, not a bit amusing.

I submit that it is part of the campaign to discredit any one who supports the Authors' Authority, opposes company unions and fights for the Guild.

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N E W S N O T E S

★ Current month's programs at the N. Y. Museum of Modern Art are: American Film Comedy (VIII): His Bitter Pill, The Freshman, Dec. 6-8; World War I in Retrospect (II): The Big Parade, Dec. 9-12; Travel and Anthropology (II): Grass, Dec. 13-15; The Films of Douglas Fairbanks (III): Don Q, Son of Zorro, Dec. 16-19; American Film Comedy

(IX): Professional Patient, The Strong Man, Dec. 20-22; American Film Comedy (X): Two Tars, Hands Up!, Dec. 23-26; The Films of Douglas Fairbanks (IV): The Black Pirate, Dec. 27-29; Mystery and Violence (I): Beau Geste (1926), Dec. 30-Jan. 2.

★ American Contemporary Gallery, Hollywood, has The Italian Straw Hat,

Dec. 5-6; A nous, la liberté, Dec. 12-13.

★ Correction: Angna Enters, reported here last month as an SWG member, has indeed been a screen writer on occasion, but has never been a member of the Guild.

★ SWG member Budd Schulberg has a sizzling piece on Hollywood makeupmen in the December issue of This Month.

★ SWG members Malvin Wald and Walter Doniger have just been informed that their play, *Father Was President*, has won its fourth national playwriting prize: the DuBose Heyward Award of the Dock Street Theatre, Charleston, South Carolina. The prize is \$500, plus a Spring production with the authors aiding in production and direction. The play has previously run at the Iowa State University Theatre and the Phoenix-Westwood, Los Angeles.

★ Arthur Laurents' *Home of the Brave*, previously seen locally in the Actors' Laboratory production, will be the attraction at the Pasadena Playhouse from Nov. 27 to Dec. 8. It will be followed by *Laura*, the play adapted by Vera Caspary and George Sklar from Miss Caspary's successful screenplay, Dec. 11-22. Dec. 25-Jan. 5 will see *Mr. Pickwick*, adapted by Cosmo Hamilton and Frank C. Reilly from Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*, as the holiday attraction on the Pasadena boards, with John Van Druten's *The Mermaids Singing* scheduled for Jan. 8-19.

★ SWG member Lillian Hellman's new play, *Another Part of the Forest*, has opened to good reviews at the Fulton, N. Y., after a successful tryout in Philadelphia.

★ Elliott Greennard, an SWG member, has sold a story titled, *Sparrow's Last Jump*, to Harpers.

★ The Data Film Unit people write us from London: "We would mention that the magazine (THE SCREEN WRITER) has received very favourable comment in the documentary press over here." . . .

The Independent Film Journal of Nov. 9 says: "Hollywood's screen bible, *The Screen Writer*, recently has published a series, by various film writers, on the deadly effects of infant mentality empowered thru censorship. This series clearly delineates the forces which seek (with painful success) to prevent the screen from presenting truth and the problems of truth."

★ Dorothy Bennett, an SWG member working at 20th Century-Fox, asks us to announce that she will henceforth be known as Dorothy Hannah. Adoption of her married name is intended to avoid further confusion with another writer by the name of Dorothy Bennett. Dorothy Hannah is not to be identified with the other Dorothy Bennett, also a writer.

★ Writers' circles are arguing vigorously over SWG member Niven Busch's provocative article, *The Myth of the Movie Director*, in the November issue of Harpers.

★ Alexander Hammid (Hackenschmied)'s article, *New Fields — New Techniques* (*Screen Writer*, May), has been translated into Czech and published in a recent issue of *Kino*, the official Prague motion picture magazine.

★ SWG member Frederick Porges is the author of a new history of cinematography, entitled *Shadows Conquer the World*, to be published Dec. 10 by the Publishing House for Science and Technics (Verlag für Wissenschaft und Technik, A. G.), Basle, Switzerland. Translations are then due in French, Dutch, Italian, Swedish, Danish and Czech, with English, of course, an imminent probability.

★ F. Hugh Herbert, new secretary of SWG and a member of our editorial committee, has a story called, *Christmas Eve at McConnell's Bar*, in the Xmas issue of Esquire.

★ Managing Editor Gordon Kahn's next piece for *The Atlantic Monthly* will be *Tuft Hunter's Hell*, in the January issue.

★ Ken Englund has replaced Melvin Frank and Norman Panama as acting chairman of the Annual Entertainment Subcommittee of SWG's Future Policy Committee (see Howard Estabrook's *New Activities of Writers*, in last month's *Screen Writer*).

★ The chart on industry earnings, 1940-46, of the seven major film studios (published in these pages in August) has proved highly helpful to many Hollywood guilds and unions in their employer-employee relationships, and has already been reprinted (to our knowledge) in *Technicians' Local 683's Flashes* and the *Screen Publicists' Guild's News Letter*.

★ New entry in the motion picture field is *La revue du cinéma*, a Paris monthly inactive since its first appearance, 1928-1931, now back in the lists with its old editor, Jean-George Auriol, and an impressive list of old and new contributors. The first (October) issue of the new series includes the first installment of Auriol's monumental *Making Pictures: The Origins of Direction*; Piero Bargellini's *Painted Words* and Jacques Bourgeois' *Animated Painting*, on the aesthetic relations between painting and motion picture techniques; Georges Sadoul's *The Sorcerers' Apprentices* (from Edison to Méliès); and Pierre Schaeffer's *The Non-visual Element of the Cinema: Analysis of the Sound Track*; Jean-Pierre Chartier's *Ivan the Terrible and Problems of Plastic Art in the Cinema*; reviews of important films currently showing in Paris: Alexander Nevsky, *Ivan the Terrible*, *Dead of Night*, Grimault's animated cartoons, *Le pays sans étoiles* (*The Country Without Stars*), *Citizen Kane*, *Marie-Louise*, *The Last Chance*, *The Battle of the Rails*; and some highly significant notes on the Cannes Festival, the star system, and the vocabulary of films, the latter discussing the origins and applications of the words used to designate the director in various languages.

★ SWG member Wilfrid Pettitt's play in free verse, *The Pipes of Dunbar*, has just hit the nation's bookstores. The play, which is based on an incident in the life of Mary, Queen of Scots, was published by the *Dramatic Publishing Company* of Chicago.

★ Stories of the you-can't-print-that variety, which have accumulated many rejection slips from timid editors, are wanted by Chet L. Swital, 4123 San Fernando Road, Glendale 4, California, for inclusion in an anthology of hitherto unpublished stories. Mr. Swital says: "These stories can fit into almost any category save perhaps the esoteric and the definitely pink." Joseph Conrad, Warrington Dawson, Vance Thompson and Arthur Stringer will be among the writers represented in the anthology.

★ Under direction of the Hollywood Writers Mobilization, talent groups and educators frequently attacked by Senator Bilbo, Representative Rankin, State Senator Tenney and Gerald L. K. Smith have organized a counter-attack against efforts to establish what they regard as an undue control over freedom of expression in the film, radio and publishing fields.

First of a series of "Counter-attack" forums was held Dec. 2 at the El Patio theatre with SWG member Howard Koch as chairman and another SWG member, Millen Brand, among the speakers. The second forum, Dec. 16 at the El Patio, will deal with the question of "Who Owns the Air," an analysis of forces at work to control radio program content. Among the speakers scheduled to take part in the forum series are Peter de Lima, Frances Eiserberg, Dr. Franklin Fearing, Lion Feuchtwanger, Dr. Harry Hoijer, John B. Hughes, Emmet Lavery, John Howard Lawson, Kenneth Macgowan, Arch Oboler, W. E. Oliver, Harold Orr, William N. Robson, Dore Schary, Paul Stewart and Dalton Trumbo.

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THE MANUSCRIPT MARKET

LISTING THE AUTHORS, TITLES AND CHARACTER
OF LITERARY MATERIAL RECENTLY ACQUIRED BY
THE MOTION PICTURE STUDIOS

In identifying the form of literary material acquired, the following descriptions are used:

Book, a published or unpublished full-length work of non-fiction; **Book of Stories**, a collection of published stories or articles; **Novel**, a work of fiction of book length, whether published, in proof or in manuscript; **Novelette**, the same, but of lesser length; **Original**, any material written expressly for the screen; **Play**, produced or unproduced work in theatrical form; **Published Story**, a published short story or article; **Radio Script**, material originally written for radio production; **Screenplay**, material already in shooting script form; **Short Story**, short fiction still in manuscript; **Treatment**, preliminary screen adaptation of material already published in some other form.

JULY 1, 1946 TO NOVEMBER 1, 1946

COLUMBIA

ADELE COMANDINI, The Mating of Millie McGonigle, Original
GORDON GRAND, Major Denning's Trust Estate, Published Story
JOHN WESLEY GREY (with Marcel Klauber), Archangel on Horseback, Original
SHERWOOD KING, If I Die Before I Wake, Novel
MARCEL KLAUBER (with John Wesley Grey), Archangel on Horseback, Original
J. DONALD WILSON, Destiny, Original

COMET

JIMMY HATLO, Little Iodine, Comic Strip
REGINALD LEBORG (with Kurt Neuman), Nightingale, Original
KURT NEUMAN (with Reginald LeBorg), Nightingale, Original
LOU POLLOCK, Stork Bites Man, Book

EAGLE-LION

LOUIS BROMFIELD, Kenny, Original
VERA CASPARY, Out of the Blue, Novel
SONIA CHERNUS (with George Ross), It's All In the Game, Original
AGATHA CHRISTIE, Love From a Stranger, Story basis of Play by Frank Vosper
PEGGY GOODIN, Clementine, Novel
OWEN LAMONT, Cowards of Us All, Play
ERNA LAZARUS, Hollywood Hi-Jinks, Original
JEAN MUIR, Wild Horse Round-Up, Published Story
GEORGE ROSS (with Sonia Chernus), It's All In the Game, Original
FRANK VOSPER, Love From a Stranger, Play Based on Story by Agatha Christie
FRANK WISBAR, Girls' Camp Story, Original
AUBREY WISBERG, New Girl In Town, Original

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER

SHOLEM ASCH, East River, Novel
STANLEY DONEN (with Gene Kelly), Take Me Out to the Ball Game, Original
GENE KELLY (with Stanley Donen), Take Me Out to the Ball Game, Original
E. M. KOELBEL, Tom (Cat) and the Liquid Sunshine, Original
CHARLES MARTIN, Upward to the Stars, Original
J. P. MARQUAND, B. F.'s Daughter, Novel
JULIAN MYERS, Little F.B.I., Original
STEFAN ZWEIG, The Burning Secret, Published Story

MONOGRAM

MACKINLAY KANTOR, Gun Crazy, Book
LOUIS MANTZ (with Stanley Rubin), Violence, Original
ARTHUR MILLER, Focus, Original
JAY MONAGHAN, Last of the Bad Men, Published Story
VICTOR PAHLEN, Masterpiece, Original
CRAIG RICE, The Big Story, Original
STANLEY RUBIN, (with Louis Lantz), Violence, Original

PARAMOUNT

MARGARET FERGUSON, Sleep My Pretty One, Novel
L. L. FOREMAN, Guardian of the Angels, Short Story
RIAN JAMES, High and Mighty, Play
JEANNETTE C. NOLAN, Gather Ye Rosebuds, Novel
JULIAN ZIMET, High Holiday, Original

RKO

JACQUES COMPANEZ, The Vacation of Doctor Besse, Original

FERENC MOLNAR, It's Hard to Be (Someone)
Play
WILLIAM M. RANKIN, Father Dunne's News-
boys Home, Story and Treatment
PETER VIERTEL, Woman With Spurs, Original

REPUBLIC

ROBERT LESLIE BELLEM, Stock Shot, Published
Story
MARTHA CHEAVENS, Fall On Your Knees,
Original
MILTON L. GUNZBURG, Come and Get Me,
Original
GARLAND ROARK, Wake of the Red Witch,
Novel
THOMAS R. ST. GEORGE, Books Are Lighter
Than Rifles, Original
W. C. TUTTLE, Vanishing Brands, Published
Story
LESLIE T. WHITE, Matches in Hell, Published
Story

SELZNICK-VANGUARD

E. C. BENTLEY, Trent's Last Case, Novel
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD, Tender Is the Night,
Novel

TRIANGLE

AVERY HOPWOOD (with Mary Roberts Rine-
hart) The Bat, Play
MARY ROBERTS RINEHART (with Avery Hop-
wood) The Bat, Play
LEO ROSTEN, Sleep My Love, Novel

TWENTIETH CENTURY-FOX

JOHN F. BARDIN, The Deadly Percheron, Novel
VALENTINE DAVIES, This Is the Time, Original
JOHN GALSWORTHY, Escape, Play
WILLIAM LINDSAY GRESHAM, Nightmare
Alley, Novel
JOHN KLEMPNER, Papa Was a Juggler, Nov-
elette
KENNETH ROBERTS, Lydia Bailey, Novel
JOSEPH SHEARING, Moss Rose, Novel
MARY JANE WARD, The Snake Pit, Novel
PAUL WELLMAN, Walls of Jericho, Novel

UNITED ARTISTS

(Bennett Productions)

LEON GUTTERMAN (with Edwin V. Westrate)
Smart Woman, Original
EDWIN V. WESTRATE (with Leon Gutterman)
Smart Woman, Original

UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL

GRACE AMUNDSON, The Endorsement, Orig-
inal
GEORGE BALZER (with Sam Perrin) Are You
With It, Book of Musical
REX BEACH, The World In His Arms, Novel

HOMER CURRAN, Song of Norway, Operetta
Based on Play

HANS HABE, The Aftermath, Novel
SIG HERZIG (with Fred Saidu) Bloomer Girl,
Book of Musical

DOROTHY B. HUGHES, Ride a Pink Horse,
Novel

DAN JAMES (with Lilith James) Bloomer Girl,
Musical Based on Play

LILITH JAMES (with Dan James) Bloomer
Girl, Musical Based on Play

STORM JAMESON, The Other Side, Novel
MACKINLAY KANTOR, Midnight Lace, Novel

EDWIN LANHAM, The Senator Was Indiscreet,
Published Story

MILTON LAZARUS, Song of Norway, Book of
Operetta

LEE LOEB (with Arthur Strawn) Sleep No
More, Play

GEORGE MALCOLM-SMITH, Are You With It?,
Musical Based on Novel "Slightly Perfect"

ROMAN MCDUGALD, Purgatory Street, Novel
SAM PERRIN (with George Balzer) Are You
With It?, Book of Musical

FRED SAIDY (with Sig Herzig) Bloomer Girl,
Book of Musical

ARTHUR STRAWN (with Lee Loeb) Sleep No
More, Play

(Skirball-Manning)

JACK LEONARD (with James O'Hanlon) The
Wind Is Blind, Original

JAMES O'HANLON (with Jack Leonard) The
Wind Is Blind, Original

JOHN O'HARA, Appointment in Samarra, Novel
HENRIETTE MARTIN (with Leo Mittler) Bar-
ren Heart, Original

LEO MITTLER (with Henriette Martin) Barren
Heart, Original

WARNER BROS.

ERNEST HAYCOX, Montana, Original
JOHN KAFKA, The Apple Orchard, Novel

ERNEST LEHMAN (with Louis Sobol) The
Need for Each Other, Original

HERBERT CLYDE LEWIS, One Last Fling,
Original

CARLOS A. OLIVARI (with S. Pondal Rios)
Romance in High C, Original

S. PONDEL RIOS (with Carlos A. Olivari)
Romance in High C, Original

EDITH ROBERTS, That Hagen Girl, Novel
LOUIS SOBOL (with Ernest Lehman) The Need
for Each Other, Original

(U. S. Pictures)

HENRY JAMES, The Aspern Papers, Novel
ANITA LOOS (with Joseph Than) White
Night, Original

JOSEPH THAN (with Anita Loos) White
Night, Original

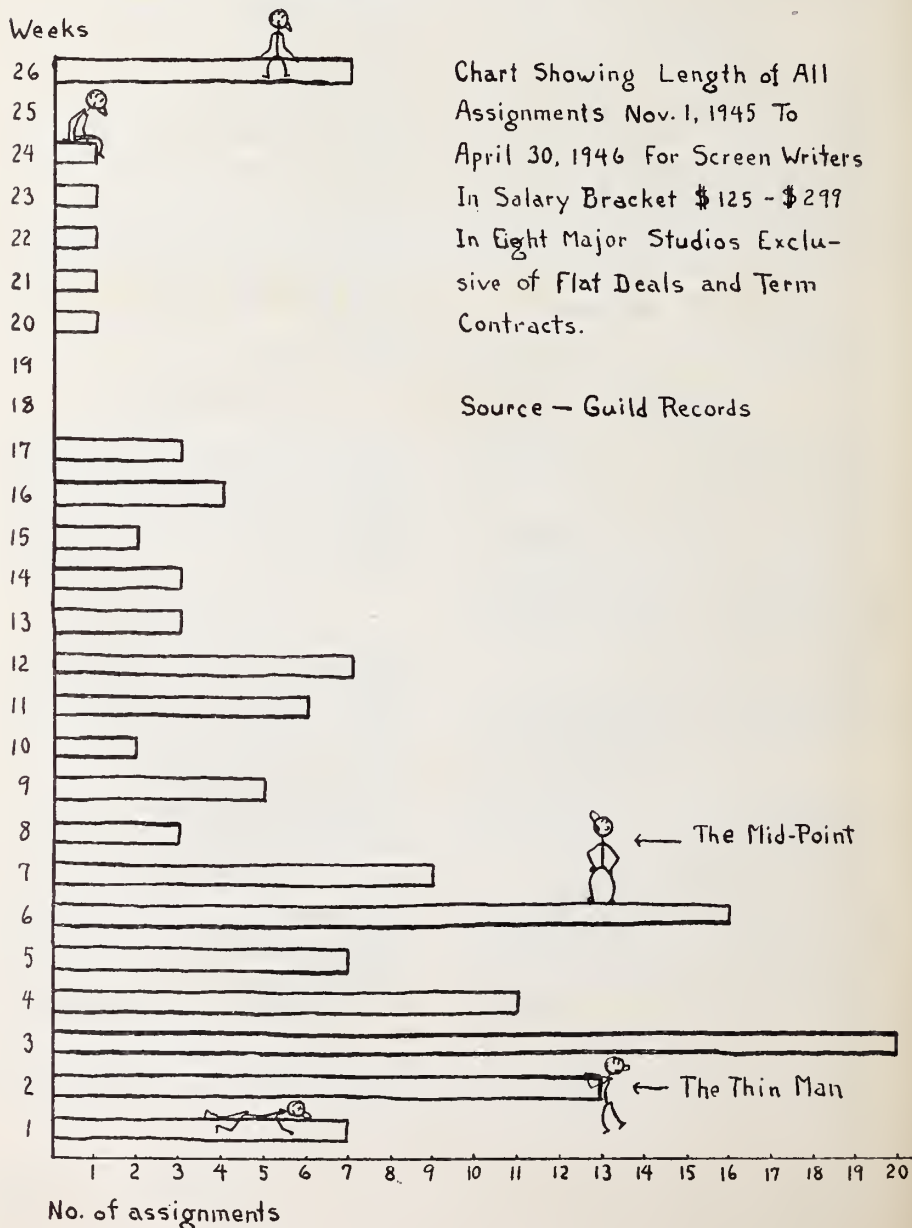
DAN TOTTERO, Distant Drums, Play



FACTS AND FIGURES

The following chart, prepared by the National Labor Bureau of San Francisco under the direction of Henry P. Melnikow, is self-explanatory. This chart, like the

preceding ones already published, should be kept by interested readers for reference purposes.



NEXT MONTH AND THEREAFTER

JAMES M. CAIN • VINCENT SARGENT LAWRENCE
 I. G. GOLDSMITH • MADE IN ENGLAND
 EDWIN S. MILLS, JR. • THE TELEVISION SCRIPT
 RICHARD HUBLER • A PULITZER PRIZE FOR MOTION PICTURES

And further articles by LOUIS ADAMIC, MILLEN BRAND, HUGO BUTLER,
 SHERIDAN GIBNEY, ROBERT HARARI, LEWIS HERMAN, ARTHUR
 KOBER, VLADIMIR POZNER, ROBERT ROSSEN, HAROLD J. SALEMSON,
 ARTHUR STRAWN, DALTON TRUMBO, and others.

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C. R. Graves - Farmers' Market, 6901 West 3rd St., Los Angeles 36
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Hollywood News Service, Whitley & Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood 2
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Post Office News Co., 37 W. Monroe St., Chicago
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NEW YORK:

Book 'n' Things, 73 Fourth Ave., New York 3
Brentano - Periodical Department, 586 Fifth Ave., New York 19
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Gramercy Book Mart, 51 W. 47th St., New York 19
Kamin Dance Bookshop and Gallery, 1365 Sixth Ave., at 56th St., New York 19
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PENNSYLVANIA:

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EIRE:

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ENGLAND:

Carter's Bookshop, 51 Willesden Lane, London N.W. 2
Literature Kiosk, Unity Theatre, London

OFFICIAL SUBSCRIPTION AGENT FOR GREAT BRITAIN:

Philip Firestein, 82 King Edward's Road, Hackney, London E8, England

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the **SCREEN WRITER**

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‘ ‘ M A D E I N E N G L A N D ’ ’

I. G. GOLDSMITH

SINCE last June, when I arrived in this country, I have constantly been asked why I think British films of recent years have been so good. In America, as everywhere else in the world, there is a growing respect and admiration for films produced in Great Britain. Some of these pictures have been so satisfying to audiences that the "Made In England" trade-mark is now considered a promise of quality and good taste.

This has not always been so. There have been two great changes lately. One is the change in the organization of the British motion picture industry, and the other is a discovery made by English film producers.

Later in this article, I shall talk about the healthy change in the organization of the industry, but now I am eager to talk of a subject which is close to my heart. This is the great discovery . . .

I refer to the discovery made by British producers of the author, the

I. G. GOLDSMITH is the distinguished British producer best known in America for his production of *The Stars Look Down* from A. J. Cronin's novel. His latest picture made in England is *Bedella*, from Vera Caspary's novel. He is now under contract to Eagle-Lion Studios.

greatest single contributor to (and here I use a word dear to the Hollywood industry) **entertainment** value of a film. It is certainly true that the co-operation of producer, director, actors, technicians, workmen, and even promoters is necessary to that complex project which in the end becomes a motion picture. British producers have always known this, but now they have come to look upon the work of the writer as the axis upon which the talents and labor of all these others revolve. "In the beginning was the word" . . . in the discovery and re-affirmation of this profound truth the British film industry has gained profit as well as glory.

Consider two such recent films as *The Seventh Veil* and *Brief Encounter*. *The Seventh Veil* was produced by its author, Sidney Box, who has since become head of Gainsborough Productions. Noel Coward wrote and produced *Brief Encounter*. In these pictures the entertainment value was derived from reality. Audiences believed the stories because they could identify themselves with the characters. Because they were emotionally excited by their identification they were not overcome by the ennui with which they view so many costly pictures.

This reality was due to the author-producers' refusal to let mechanical elements destroy human values. Their contribution to the film was not only executive but creative. Understanding of character, of the human elements in the pictures, came from first-hand observation rather than from the will to show power as top-man in the film-making project. The producer's hardest job is to make decisions which influence every phase of production work. When he is himself a writer (or one of the writers on a picture) he is not so inclined to make decisions which sacrifice the human element to production effects.

When British films are compared with the Hollywood product, the first criticism is lack of glamour. Some of this is due to temporary technical inferiority and a poverty in material things, but glamour's absence is also due to the will to be honest, to photograph people in dramatic situations, rather than glittering interiors and elegant clothes. Non-creative producers everywhere dote on glamour. It can be manufactured, therefore understood by a producer who is merely a manufacturer. The writer-producer or the director-producer recognizes the value of unglamorous people, of realistic backgrounds.

Most producers are not writers, but some of them who are also

directors . . . like Carol Reed, Frank Launder and Anthony Asquith . . . work on their screenplays. Emeric Pressburger, the popular film writer, shares credit for his work with director-producer Michael Powell. And in no picture made in Britain or America has the author's genius been shown greater respect than in *Henry V*, which was adapted, produced and directed by Lawrence Olivier in a way that its author, long since dead, could not criticize.

Even those producers who do not have a share in the work of writing the picture have learned to give the writer greater freedom and power in the creation of the screenplay. Writers are often consulted on those production details which influence the story and give authenticity to its backgrounds. This tendency to emphasize the writer does not detract from the importance of the producer, nor minimize his function as the maker of the film. As such, his responsibilities are enormous.

The first of these, to my mind, is the selection of the story. Having found a story he likes and believes in, it becomes his sacred duty to preserve its integrity in the translation from one to another form. All of his talent and executive ability must be directed toward the protection of those qualities which he found attractive in the story, and to be sure that these qualities are not destroyed in the process of converting it to a screenplay. His selection of a writer of the screenplay is, therefore, his second tremendous responsibility.

The blending of these elements . . . the spirit of the original author, the work of the screenplay writer, the story itself and the mechanics of the screenplay . . . requires the producer's guidance. The producer, unhappily, is not always a free and unshackled guide. He is limited by material considerations, many of them; the commercial, which means costs, studios facilities, etc.; censorship, which takes into account the varied regulations of the different countries in which the film can be shown; casting, which is not so simple as it looks when you thumb through a directory of actors all of whom at that first happy glance, seem available; taste, which may mean the choice of technicians, the approval of sets and costumes, or the elimination of dirty words; and technicalities which, for example, in England, are influenced by weather that does not favor exteriors. And in addition to the co-ordination of these branches of production, he must be the arbiter of opinion when there are clashes

between the various temperaments, ambitions, convictions and attitudes of his collaborators.

Indeed, the British writer who has worked with one of these modern producers does not underestimate the importance of the producer's share in the making of a film. On the contrary, the producer's respect for the writer's contribution has resulted in the writer viewing his producer with greater esteem. Such a man as Michael Balcon, who made the original and daring *Dead of Night* . . . has won the admiration of every writer who has ever worked with him.

All this is very different from the old days of British production when a producer was likely to argue, "I liked that scene in such-and-such a film, and I want you to write one like it for my production," or "I'd like a chase at the end," or "a bang-up beginning," or "a happy ending," . . . all without regard for the integrity of the story or the author's conception of the characters. I remember witnessing a painful scene in which another British producer told a writer, "I don't care about the characters. I want these scenes written in." The writer argued, saying that he could not write in scenes which had nothing to do with the story and which destroyed characterization, but the producer snapped, "I pay you and not your characters, so you'll do what I want." The writer yielded, but later told me he felt like a prostitute.

No longer is it necessary for honest writers in England to think of screen work as prostitution. The importance of their integrity has been recognized, and this recognition has resulted in a miracle. Today, British films, good and bad, are remarkably different from each other, and also different from American and French films. They show individuality and originality. They are not merely monotonous replicas of the films from the neighbors' shops. Because the writer is given his proper place in the making of films, the work of everyone else in the industry has been enhanced. Producers, actors, directors, technicians and workmen have been given the chance to use their talents.

This happy change could not have taken place if there had not been the money to back the risks of experiment, nor the courage to change the methods of production. And this is where the change in the industry

is concerned, a change which came about through the sincere ambitions of one man.

J. Arthur Rank is very rich, and ordinarily I am prejudiced against those who can throw around millions while I must watch pennies. Aware of these prejudices I met Mr. Rank for the first time. My prejudices were soon dispelled. At that meeting and at all subsequent interviews I found him a man who refused to surround himself with the aura of wealth and power. He is modest, humble and respectful toward creative work. I am sure that he has never tried to force his will upon his associates with the attitude, "I have money so I'm right, and you do what I say."

For many years before he became active in the industry, Mr. Rank had been associated indirectly with British film-making. It was probably during these passive years that he found the flaws in the old system. He recognized the potentialities of British-made films but saw that the producers were hampered by the necessity of becoming promoters and raising the money for their pictures. Creative producers were obliged to give too much time and energy to activities better left to the promoters, and promoters, calling themselves producers, interfered in the most amateurish and incompetent way with the work of creative people.

J. Arthur Rank had money. That fortunate fact gave him the power to fulfill his ambitions, but even more fortunate was the fact that he did not regard profit-making as his basic motive. Here, for once, was a man with the ambition to better British films. And so he formed a number of independent units, gave the producers money for unhampered creative work, and has never exercised any special authority except in those cases when his deep-rooted and sincere religious convictions have been offended. To my knowledge he has never allowed his political viewpoint (whatever it may be) to interfere. He has, in fact, invited so progressive a writer as J. B. Priestly to work for him and to express himself politically as freely as he wished.

Within the past few years the entire complexion of British film-making has changed. Not only the production units within the Rank organization, but the producers who work for other corporations, are able to work with greater independence and integrity. Organization has freed the producers of financial worries, and while a few have betrayed the confidence placed in them, for the most part the effect of this new

freedom has been a higher artistic level and greater profits for films made in England.

There is, however, one danger in the new set-up. As always when big profits are involved, the vultures gather. So long as J. Arthur Rank protects British film-making with the kind of ambition he showed in the beginning, British films will maintain their high standard of individuality, originality and good taste. But it now seems that the organizing influences in his little Empire are beginning to destroy his plans. Business men and promoters, instead of confining their efforts to finance and exploitation, are beginning to concern themselves with purely artistic and creative matters. Former City clerks begin to have a say in the selection of stories and artists; the guiding idea of making good films is replaced by the considerations of salesmanship. The genius of authors and artists seems to be turned toward commercial competition with the United States, and the ambition to make of London another Hollywood.

Promoters and salesmen, like their kind all over the world, are so dazed by the vision of immediate profit that they cannot see the dangers of this sort of standardization and competition. They do not realize that London can never become another Hollywood; its genius is of another kind. The undying glory of England is her literature. If this peculiar genius is encouraged as part of film-making, the business of film-making in England will flourish. One good original picture does more for the industry than millions spent in exploitation. The commercializing and standardization of British films, the distortion of Mr. Rank's original idea and consequently a renewed prostitution of the author to the promoter's will are the dangers for the trade mark, "Made in England."



A PULITZER PRIZE FOR MOTION PICTURES

RICHARD G. HUBLER

WHEN Joseph Pulitzer, the blind newspaper publisher, died in 1911 he saw farther than most men with a pair of 20/20's. By his will he established a school of journalism at Columbia University in New York; a series of college scholarships; and most notably a group of prizes in the field of reportorial and creative writing.

The latter have become famous as the Pulitzer Prizes. They cover a wide range of credit. They provide awards, tokens amounting to no more than a \$500 gold medal, for disinterested and meritorious services by a newspaper; distinguished reporting, foreign or Washington correspondence, editorials, cartoons. Medals are struck off to outstanding examples of newspaper photography; distinguished novels, plays, histories, biographies, poetry, and music.

The Pulitzer Prizes today represent a criterion of repute and worth. It is true the awards have often been niggled at but they remain among the chief recognitions of artistic merit in American journalism and letters.

Yet in the single field where the sum of the arts — visual and aural — has at least its greatest potential medium, there is no provision for a Pulitzer Prize. The motion pictures are not upon the agenda of artistic awards.

The reason for this omission of Pulitzer himself is obvious. At the time of his death the invention of Thomas Edison was barely unswaddled from the laboratory. Though *The Great Train Robbery* was made in 1903

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the first Hollywood job was late in 1911. There were less than half a thousand theatres for the public, most of them reconverted grocery stores. It had a standing comparable to a yoyo contest or a penny arcade, costing a nickel to attend, hence "nickelodeon." There was no slightest indication that the motion picture would become the influence it has since shown itself.

In the thirty-five years since Pulitzer's death the audience of the screen has grown from a few thousand to nearly a hundred million. It has developed a high degree of persuasiveness and technical brilliance. No one would maintain that in those three and a half decades the motion picture has fulfilled the exacting standards of the other lettered arts — as no one would maintain that Joseph Richardson's *Clarissa Harlow* represents the apogee of the novel or a Pat-and-Mike joke the zenith of the short story. But the overwhelming probability of such development is undeniable.

To a large degree there is a conspiracy of silence and snobbery concerning the movies. It is reminiscent of the traditional attitude of the aristocracy toward the nouveau riche. It is not without basis: the motion picture is more often lefthanded and abominable in its artistic execution than otherwise. And as in the case of any aristocracy the snub is largely made up of a growing fear in the sister arts that the motion picture may rob them not only of prestige, talent, influence and money — but also of their virtue. Few arts have been so rapacious.

Because of this conspiracy, the motion picture is forced to wind its own horn. It has done this better than any other industry in the world. If nothing else, it has superb exploitation of every sort. This defensive neurosis, inspired by the feeling that the screen is the bastard of art, unwanted at every doorstep, has in turn produced the nonpareil of naivete — the Academy awards by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences. Like an oldfashioned powder-train, this solemn back-clapping has fired lesser emulation. In 1945 one fan magazine handed out thirty-five gold medals to compliment the producers of a single picture.

The Academy, together with its flatterers, has been assiduous in handing out its statuetted Oscars since 1928. The splendor of the annual dinners has steadily increased (excepting a temporary eclipse during World War II) and the compliments and self-generated prestige have

risen in direct ratio to the box-office, in inverse ratio, usually, to the worth of the picture. The only hopeful recent sign was that the speeches have been reduced from 45 minutes to 45 seconds — records held respectively by Charles Curtis, then the vice president of the United States, and James Cagney, then the star of *Yankee Doodle Dandy*.

What idiocy this inbred praise and inhibited exhibitionism can lead to is apparent. When the Academy dinner can garner nearly 1500 columns of free publicity for two months of the year, then no politician can logroll more efficiently than the pseudo-artists of the motion picture. When all in an industry are kissin' kin, the sole sufferer by such awards is the standard of the motion picture itself.



It may be diffidently suggested that the Academy — founded of, by, and for the industry that produces motion pictures — is hardly the impartial agency to sift the artistic facts and make the proper awards. It may be, as one recipient said, nice to know what the people in one's own business think of your work — but it is no more than nice. It is hardly inspiring. Even less is it congenial to raising the level of a business that wants desperately, to the point of subsidizing its own cheer-leaders and critics, to become a genuine art.

Not that awards are not needed. Any scheme designed to jack up the low-slung differential of Hollywood pictures is needed.

It may be pointed out that the proper existing agency for such awards might be the committee for the Pulitzer Prizes. That group has already taken the whole framework of American letters for its province; it has long ago recognized photography in its newspaper section. Writing has always been included as the major part of its deliberations and awards for music have been made as long ago as 1943. In such a group of prizes the motion picture ideally belongs.

The girth of a 3000-mile continent away, the Pulitzer officials would be able to look at the well-manured produce from the truck farms of Hollywood with a clear eye. Uninfected by the myopia of publicity and self-seeking, an effective and salutary award might be made. True, Monogram might win out over Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, a contingency

which must not go unforseen. In that case MGM might instantly bar the Pulitzer judges from their shows — an action recently taken by MGM against an adverse critic of the British Broadcasting Corporation — but this over a period of time might turn out to be a Good Thing.

Hollywood convinced itself a long time back that it was good. It may be time now to convince the rest of the world that it is good. To give the whole idea of artistic awards a respectable standing (beyond the purview of boxoffice where sometimes even a good picture will make money) it will be necessary to supply an impartial bench. The most distinguished, able, and well-established jurists are those of the Pulitzer Prizes.

It may be protested that some of the latter judges are fogeys out of step with the times. To this any intelligent motion picture goer who has flicked his change under a wicket at any time during the recent past is entitled to reply: as far as the screen is concerned, what this country needs is some good old fogeyism.

If the point is made and the motion picture industry really wants to enter the Pulitzer lists, it can be done. The committee has enlarged the list of awards from time to time and even altered the terms. Since 1934, for example, the specifications for the prize-winning novel and play have carried the notation: "preferably dealing with American life."

There is nothing exclusive about the Pulitzer Prizes. The way is straight, legal, and advisable. One difficulty is in the way. That is, no matter how badly the motion picture industry might want its product to be screened for a Pulitzer Prize, such a category might be denied. The Pulitzer committee may have seen a motion picture lately.

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VINCENT SARGENT LAWRENCE

JAMES M. CAIN

VARIOUS writers have become legends in Hollywood, such as Frances Marion, Charles Brackett, and Robert Hopkins among the living, and Jeanie Macpherson, Tom Geraghty, Bill McGuire, and Grover Jones among those no longer with us; but no writer that I know of has become so fantastic an epic, the subject of anecdotes that take such long hours in the telling, as this Vincent Lawrence who has just died. Incredibly enough, most of the anecdotes are true, and yet, in spite of the bizarre personal qualities that begot them, he was one of the most valued writers in the business, and the reason for his value was one of the clearest, coldest, hardest minds that ever faced a confused, divided, and desperate story conference and got order where only chaos had been. He was a screwball, but the screwball wins ball games.

Lest, in case you didn't know him, you still season the tales you have heard with several pounds of salt, let me tell you that none of the tales did real justice to the actuality. In his saga, the fact always dwarfed the apocrypha. If you heard he was ignorant, multiply by seven and you will still be short of how ignorant he was. At all things not worth knowing, such as the number of times Cobb went from first to third on a bunt, how many times Dempsey floored Willard at Toledo, how many points Alabama scored in the Rose Bowl game of 1926, he was encyclopedic, and his testimony needed no further checking. At things of a more substantial kind, regarded by man as having value to the human intellect, he was an utter zero. If a point came up, let us say in the realm of history,

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something like the Battle of Balaklava and its date, it would be most surprising if he placed it on the right continent and in the right century; indeed, to be wholly candid about it, it would be completely most astonishing if he had ever heard of the Battle of Balaklava, or the Crimean War, or Tennyson. To his friend, the late William Harris, Jr., who complained that the Lawrence 1, 2, & 3 were nothing but the old Aristotelean Beginning, Middle, and End, he exclaimed, irritatedly: "Well General, who the hell was Aristotle, and who did he lick?"

If you heard of his profligacy with money, multiply by seven times seventeen, and you may have some slight comprehension of it. Once, rehearsing a show, he and Harris grabbed a bite in a corner drugstore. Said Harris: "The check for the two of us was 67c, and the girl would have been quite pleased with the 33c that would have been left if he had given her a buck. He gave her \$5 and walked out. She was scared to death, for all that spelled to her was a company spotter, and I'm sure she didn't sleep for a week expecting the axe. Things like that make no sense, but he did them, and he wasn't living if he didn't do them." If you asked him to dinner, before you were done with it he had handed your favorite captain, the one who smiles so pleasantly when you five-spot him now and then, a \$20 bill, for doing him some never-to-be-forgotten favor like getting him a package of cigarettes. For people in need his generosity was incredible. Once, hearing me talk of a writer I hoped to get a job for, on a Pasadena newspaper, he cut in on me brusquely with: "Job, hell, sure you'll get him a job — sometime. What he needs, here now tonight, is dough." And so help me, ten minutes later we arrived at the door of this man he had never seen, and slipped a note under the door, with a \$50 bill in it. And in my own case, the thing sometimes went into four figures. My first novel, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, is dedicated to him, in part because of encouragement, in part because of technical help, but in part also because he lent me the money to eat on while I was writing it, and he felt I rated steak, not beans.

If you heard he drank, multiply by 100,000, or 1,000,000, and you will still, probably, be a little short. He drank and drank and drank. He drank enough to float the battleship Maine. He made Honest John Barleycorn's acquaintance quite early in life, and they must have hit it off

beautifully for a time, because he went on the wagon at 24 and stayed on it for 18 long years. Then, coming to Hollywood, he began to slip off it, and presently alcohol was the great problem of his life. He licked it, but of course in his own special, peculiar, idiotic way, the hard way, as we say nowadays. Charles Jackson took it on the chin until the craving left him, and at last the problem was liquidated. Lawrence would take it on the chin for five days, until the craving had become torture; then, Saturday having arrived, he would enter the Lakeside Club and be served six martinis on one tray, by a waiter who didn't have to be told, but knew what to do and came running. Then would ensue a brief respite, the found weekend, whose only result was to whip craving to an intolerable pitch. Then, drawn, sombre, and grim, he would sweat out another five days, get his work done, add thousands to the take of some movie, and Saturday start all over again. He did this for sixteen years. Of suffering, in consequence of it, he probably had more than most men ever dream of.

If you heard of his pantomimed act — the Ball Game — I would simply quit multiplying, for this was beyond mathematics, whether in this world or out of it. For I have seen the ball game, many times; let me repeat, with these eyes I have seen it. I have also seen the Poker Game, as played by Mr. Bert Williams in the Ziegfeld Follies, and I found the Ball Game greater art. For while the Poker Game had pathos, and profound and nourishing humors, the Ball Game had pain, to say nothing of blood and sweat and tears; it tore you, that that poor slug out there on the mound, giving his all, should get such betrayals, from his fielders, the umpire, above all, his catcher. And, mind you, this was no set piece, as Mr. Williams' was, cooked up and needled for your high entertainment. It was but a phase of absent-mindedness, a mere concomitant of cerebration, a discharge of nervous energy, something to be doing with his hands, as some men pitch half dollars in the air and catch them, and other men doodle scratch pads. It had an eerie, other-worldly effect on Hollywood when it first was seen here, for it was a Hollywood still fresh on the imbecilities of the silent picture, and pretty convinced that if any man but be crazy enough, he must, **post hoc, propter hoc, prima facie,** and **ipso facto**, be a genius. Thus the ball game, probably more than any

other factor, rounded out the legend, put vine leaves in its hair, clothed and anointed it for immortality.

And yet, on the mound or off it, off the wagon or under it, he worked steadily from his arrival here until he died, got out scores of pictures, and most of those who employed him, since they hired him back time and again, showed that they felt he earned the prodigious sums they paid him. He was happiest, I think, with Louis D. Lighton, and I think regarded *Test Pilot*, done with him, as his best picture. But he worked for many producers, and I have yet to meet one who did not fall under his spell, and I have met one or two who not only fell under his spell, but acquired his peculiar way of talking, with its constant sprinkling of "lad" and "pal," which was nothing but Broadway (acquired from George M. Cohan) superposed on his native Boston. And I have yet to meet one who had not profited, no matter how long the script took, or caused his company to profit from Lawrence's uncanny gifts with a script. Well, on what were those gifts founded? First, an exhaustive study of the theatre, begun in his days as a playwright in New York, whom George Jean Nathan called "the first high comedy writer of the American stage." It is an institution full of saws and precepts, most of them furnished by ham actors and practically all of them false. Lawrence took nothing on faith. He studied writing, acting, production, and most of all he studied that foundation of all theatre, the audience. This vast fund of information, which he added to constantly, was focused on whatever needed fixing, and lent him a perspicacity that few writers, and still fewer producers could match.

But at the center of this knowledge lay a conviction, partly instinctive but buttressed by study, that the love story was the foundation of everything, and that to enter the love story you must come in by the front door, and not climb in through a window. This seems obvious enough now, this beginning of the main relationship, but it didn't then. It was expounded to a Hollywood that took a summer-park view of the problem, and that hadn't suspected that this perfunctory notion of technique might have something to do with the trouble it was then having at the boxoffice. Until Lawrence got here, it was thought sufficient to send the lovers, as soon as they met, for a little trip to Coney Island and a

quick montage in the chute-the-chutes, the roller coaster, the ferris wheel, and the merry-go-round. As they entered the Tunnel of Love, as boy got that look on his face and leaned close to girl, they dissolved and the trick was regarded as done. Lawrence wouldn't have it. There had to be, he insisted, a "love rack," an episode on which we entered the love story. In it, he said, not only the characters but the audience as well, must feel their discovery of each other, and the thing couldn't be phoney. He wouldn't have a manufactured love rack, or a remembered love rack, or a stolen love rack. It had to involve real verses, specially composed for this occasion, and until it was there, he refused to consider the rest of the "1," as he called it, or the catastrophic "2" which was Aristotle's Middle, or the "3" of the denouement, which was Aristotle's End.

This was his big contribution to moving pictures. He was not, of course, the first to write love stories, but he was the first out here, I think, to articulate the philosophy of the love story into the intellectual whole, so that now we know, or think we know, what we are doing. Personally, my debt to him must go farther than that, for the core of his thinking is also the core of my novels; if ever a man had an intellectual parent, at least so far as this narrative part of my work is concerned, I must acknowledge such a relationship with Lawrence. And in closing this little tribute, I might say I have the most indescribably lost feeling doing it. I have hardly written the symbol, --o-- , which closes all my stories, in the last twenty years, without wondering what Lawrence was going to think of it. That such a speculation can no longer enter my mind is, believe me, something I shall be a long time getting used to.

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I T A I N ' T T H E S T O R K

ARTHUR STRAWN

SINCE the obvious corollary of keeping politics out of the Guild is keeping the Guild out of politics, it seems to me that people who offer this formula do so for the same reason that impels Mama to tell Ella Mae the little fiction about the stork — not from a desire to deceive, but no doubt because Mama doesn't think Ella Mae advanced enough to be told the facts of life, and this to her seems the easiest way to avoid the problem.

But there comes a time in Ella Mae's life when implicit faith in Mama's well-intentioned fiction can be a source of acute mental distress, if not the cause of complete loss of social standing. And since I do not wish to find the Guild in any comparable position, and believe that its membership is mature enough to mingle in the adult world of reality, I shall risk a little frank talk both to the well-meaning people who offer the advice that politics is not a Guild affair, and to the innocents who believe it.

Politics is not necessarily a dirty word. The legend that it is an activity somehow unworthy of self-respecting people is actually propaganda assiduously spread by the very ones who profit most when politics is practised only by the boys in the back room. Politics is simply an instrument whereby a group of people implement their will. It is not an end in itself, but the means whereby people seek to determine the economic and social conditions under which they live. It's politics that makes the laws that determine our freedoms and restraints, and affects us in

ARTHUR STRAWN, who has been a screen writer for many years, is also the author of several books and produced plays. He served as a captain in the Air Corps, Motion Picture Division. He is working on a history of the SWG.

every aspect of our lives, from our right to worship in a church of our choice to the price we pay for a quart of milk.

If the Americans of 175 years ago had decided to keep politics out of the colonies and the colonies out of politics, we would now be a dominion instead of a republic. Every advance in civil and economic rights has been preceded by intensive political debate and achieved by political pressures. One hundred and fifty years ago Americans were beginning to combine in trade unions to improve their living standards. But these pioneer organizations were not called trade unions by state and federal governments of that time. They were called conspiracies. The consequence of belonging to such a conspiracy was frequently most unpleasant. Gradually the pressure of political action changed the repressive laws against unions. But now there is reason to wonder if we have been traveling in a circle. A newly-elected Republican senator said the other day that the way to handle strikes is to draft strikers into the army and then shoot them if they refuse to work. It seems to me that concept demands some hard political thinking and political action on the part of Americans who still have a preference for the American way of life.



To say that politics doesn't concern us is simply to say that we don't give a damn what happens to us as individuals or as an organization. I believe this skittish scepticism toward politics needs to be examined carefully. What is behind it? Why is it so persistently inculcated? It seems to me writers must realize that the politician has been the victim of the same kind of stereotyping applied to Negroes, Jews, Irishmen, Italians, newspaper men, and others. Just as Negroes are portrayed as lazy, Jews wily, the Irish as superstitious, Italians as romantics or criminals, newspaper men as engagingly irresponsible rakes, so has the politician been stereotyped as a bumbling or questionable character. This portrait of the politician as a hypocritical baby-kisser or hoggish parasite has been built up in multitudes of cartoons, news stories, editorials, radio programs and on millions of feet of film. It has shaped a fairly prevalent public attitude that tends to look upon the politician at best with amused tolerance and at worst with contempt and distrust.

From distrust of politicians it is an easy bridge to distrust of politi-

cal action. There can be no doubt that small, economically powerful groups much prefer that the American public should have a bored, sceptical attitude toward politicians and politics. This preference is motivated by a lively if not enlightened sense of self-interest. The fear of popular political action and the effort to divert it on the part of privileged groups are a part of the pattern of human history. So we have the stereotyping of the politician as a bumbling bureaucrat. We have all kinds of crude or subtle encouragement for the attitude that politics is something that really should not concern nice people too closely. Let the people have their quadrennial Tweedledee-Tweedledum political show, and then let them forget about it.

I do not think we will fall into that trap. It has been pointed out many times that the Screen Writers Guild owes its existence to a long series of political actions culminating in the establishment of NLRB. This needs to be re-emphasized, frequently and forcefully, so that none of us will forget it, and so that when the opportunity comes to act, we will act cohesively and intelligently in the defense of our interests.

Not only was the Guild, as a result of a specific political act (the Wagner Act) enabled to function again, after being destroyed by the producers in 1936, but the Guild is going to have to be prepared to take political action if it is to remain in existence and to realize any of its basic aims. The achievement of an Authors' Authority is an example. The membership has gone on record, almost unanimously, in favor of the plan. And here we encounter a strange situation. For some who protest most loudly against the Guild's participation in politics are also most emphatic in their support of the Authors' Authority. This is a major contradiction. For the very question of the Authority brings up the complementary question of a new copyright law to replace the present one with its gross discrimination against writers. We are not going to get that new law by disdaining political action, by refusing to adopt a practical program to achieve it. We are going to have to fight for it, to put all the pressures we can muster on our legislative bodies, and if necessary even invade the districts of certain congressmen who oppose writers in the interest of publishers and producers, and perhaps campaign against them. Any one of these steps, I fear, is a political act. The lads and lassies who say they want both the Authors' Authority and no politics in

the Guild had better decide which of these two better represents their interests, and act accordingly.

They had better get wise immediately to the kind of political action that is being marshaled against this sound and eminently fair proposal to protect the basic property rights of creative writers. For if some among us doubt the desirability or respectability of political action, there is no doubt whatsoever among the publishers and producers who have been making a good thing out of the financial and political ineptitudes of writers. They know the value of politics as a weapon on their side, and they will use it. They are already using it, serving strident notice on legislators to beware of these unreasonable claims of the hitherto subservient writers to a little greater share in the properties we create.

This obviously capitalistic proposal to protect private property rights is being ballyhooed in 98 per cent of the nation's press as communistic — a perversion of truth so deliberate and unanimous that it may set a new precedent even in our American free press. Politicians who listen carefully to their masters' voice are echoing these fantasies. And it all constitutes political action, the group action of an organized minority pressing hard in the defense of its ancient privilege to exploit us. If we remain on the sidelines, looking at the rough-and-tumble politics of these experienced professionals with the hauteur of amateurish dilettantes, we'll deserve the kick in the pants we will most certainly get.



In spite of the confusion concerning the subject, the Guild has long recognized that as an organization it must be prepared to concern itself with politics. Not the individual political affiliations of its members; that's a personal matter, of no more concern to the membership than a man's race or religion. But the Guild's formal Statement of Policy declares that the Screen Writers Guild should take political action only where its welfare is concerned, which though timidly expressed is a definite recognition of the need of the organization to take political action where its interests are involved. Indeed, in recognition of this need, we have a standing Legislative Committee, whose function it is to observe and report back to the membership any legislative bills that affect the Guild. What kind of acts or legislation affects the Guild, would you say? I would say any proposed laws touching the relations of

employer to employee concern us; for whatever else we may be, we are a trade union of employees working for a salary in a large industry.

Did I suddenly hear another cry of outraged innocence when I said the Screen Writers Guild is a trade union? Apparently I have to shatter another illusion: Any organization formed to protect the interests of employees in relation to their employers is a trade union. Now mind you, I didn't say we were a **good** trade union, or always willing to recognize and fight for our own best interests. Nor did I say that we are not also an association of professionals, many of whom write books for publishers, stories for magazines and plays for the stage, in addition to our screen work. All I said was that the Screen Writers Guild, whatever else it may be in addition, is a trade union formed for the economic protection and betterment of screen writers as employees in the motion picture industry.

If, as writers, we are sometimes inclined to be suspicious of the obvious, let me by way of corroboration quote from Mr. Philip Dunne's article in *The Screen Writer* of October, 1946:

"For the past ten years, whatever we have chosen to call ourselves, we have acted solely as a trade union. And, strangely enough, it was the producers who made us so. Our original draft for a writer-producer agreement contained a section concerning the sale of original matter to the producing companies. This the producers refused to discuss with us. They had recognized us in the first place solely because they were forced to do so by the law: the National Labor Relations Act. This law was designed to protect any employees and their right to collective bargaining, not manufacturers' or creators' associations. It was, therefore, only in our legal status as a trade union that the producers would consent to deal with us.

"In all our dealings with the producers since that time, we have been a trade union and nothing else. It will be solely as a trade union that we will re-open negotiations in 1948. . . ."

Thus any law touching the open or closed shop concerns us. I would say any laws that affect monopoly in the production or distribution of pictures concerns us. For the reason that they vitally affect the conditions under which we work. And I would certainly say that any attacks on the rights of genuine trade unions, their right to strike and picket,

must be of vital concern to us as an independent, autonomous trade union of men and women plying the trade of screen writing. And for the same reason, any attempt to substitute law by injunction for law by statute in order to discriminate against trade unions in a dispute with employers, must concern us, perhaps to the point of using political means to defeat officials who show bias against trade unions.

If we exist as an organization to strengthen our economic position, and to obtain a more equitable share of the enormous profits our labors help create in this industry, we had better recognize that laws governing such economic struggle — whether for better copyright legislation or the right to bargain collectively — are made and changed by living men and women in legislative chambers, and that it is not only the legitimate function of a trade union to be prepared to have a voice in the making of such changes, but it is in fact the very condition of healthy survival. Any move in that direction in whatsoever degree is a political action. And failure to take such action is merely another way of guaranteeing our own defeat by default.

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At our annual meeting in November one honest gentleman, pleading for us to keep politics out of the Guild, declared that what concerned us as writers united us, but that the introduction of politics into the Guild only divided us. If he meant that no good can come from attacking individual members because they privately believe that national salvation is to come from the Republican, the Democratic, the Communist or the Prohibition party, he is of course quite correct and is merely echoing the Guild's constitution, which forbids any discrimination because of race, religion or political allegiance. But in any other sense I believe he was wrong. Because, as I have tried to indicate, what concerns us as an organization of writers can only be won by a strong trade union capable of taking political action when necessary in its own defense. I would say we can only be united when we understand what our objectives are, set them forth plainly, and do not let ourselves be deceived as to the steps needed to obtain them.

A strong contract in 1949 and an Authors' Authority won't be brought by the stork, either.

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THE BOOK BURNERS

MILLEN BRAND

THE subject of this article is the Hearst censorship or anti-filth campaign against books, particularly novels. Since movies are often based on novels and as censorship has a habit of spreading in all directions, I believe the subject is of direct interest to screen writers.

The Hearst campaign is nothing distant or unfamiliar to the vicinity of Los Angeles, for Mr. Hearst has the newspaper field hogtied here and has had little book clerks arrested for selling that great work of adult corruption, *Memoirs of Hecate County*. His tactics are excellent because it is somewhat hard to get up and make Mr. Edmund Wilson's book a supreme example of misunderstood literature, and yet the principle must be defended whatever the example. What is important is that one of the said book clerks received an anonymous letter suggesting he was a Jewish swine (although he happened to be a Scandinavian) and Hitler had known what to do with him, and the English were learning. What is important is that sexual censorship soon leads to politics, particularly when carried on by Mr. Hearst.

Every sane person should quietly ask himself why an anti-filth campaign is carried on by the most reactionary press in the country. The Hearst press consistently does what it accuses writers of doing, and says they should not do. It consistently writes indecently, pornographically, and filthily. It presents the errors of private life in a way that shatters the hope of a decent reconciliation or come-back by the persons involved; it sells lasciviousness in word and picture; it breaks down public morals by forcing the public gaze uninterruptedly on a spectacle

MILLEN BRAND, novelist, dramatist and screen writer, recently prepared for a Hollywood Writers Mobilization forum some material on the subject of book censorship. He has based this article on his notes used for the HWM forum.

of misery and shame which it has no wish to end, because to end it would cancel the very wares it sells. And this blatant press, filthy in content and intention, challenges the writer genuinely concerned with human values. Selling sensationalism (and worse), it dares the sincere artist to use his imagination in the effort to change life for the better.



Let's see what Hearst says when he calls on writers to do what he doesn't do, when, with a regular Goebbels demoniac shrilling, he projects his own guilt on others: "Never in the history of American writers have books, sold indiscriminately on the open market, been so saturated with the obscenities, immorality and degeneracy which mark the literary efforts of some authors today. The authors of these debasing books care nothing for respectable standards. They write their filthy stuff for one purpose — MONEY." Can you imagine the Hearst press having the schizophrenic gall to accuse somebody else of writing filth for money?

It will occur to many persons that another public figure once considered himself pure, and ranted about "decadence," decadent modern writing, painting, art — and "decadent democracy." Whom do we remember when the Hearst press publishes in its columns a statement made by Dr. Torrey Johnson, President of Youth for Christ: "Nothing would catch the imagination of the American people more than a series of bonfires in every city and town across America. . . . Let the school boys and girls gather all the lewd and lustful literature in great piles, and let there be a flame of indignation from coast to coast across these United States. . . ." Nazi book-burnings are the image. And so clear is the parallel, so real the danger, that Thomas Mann, who was driven out of Germany by the Nazis, was forced to say only three months ago, commenting directly on the Hearst campaign: "The virtuous lust for suppression constitutes a feature of world fascism which — it is to be hoped — has not as yet taken sufficient root in this country to determine its intellectual life."



The end result of Hitler and Goebbels was war. That is something to remember.

But what are the immediate results of the Hearst campaign? I speak now as a novelist (though also a member of the Dramatists' and

Screen Writers' Guilds). A novelist of integrity values above everything his right to deal with reality. The Hearst editorials proclaim that prostitution and houses of ill fame do less harm in fact than in the pages of novels. I am sure that unlike Mr. Hearst, most novelists believe that only by bringing the ills of society out into the open, only by showing their causes and results in a clear light, can they be cured. Most novelists believe in admitting the evil that exists in order to mobilize against it the forces of human sanity and goodness.



This problem, if I may be personal, concerns me directly. I have a novel now in galley which deals with Negro-white relations, which shows the struggle of a Negro American family to open a white neighborhood to Negro tenancy. There are elements in this realistic novel which might expose it to an attempt at censorship. I am therefore definitely concerned with any campaign which, if pressed to its logical conclusion, would keep my novel off the market.

The question may be raised as to whether the obscenity charge will be used for political purposes. Here is one answer. A student of mine, Charles Dwoskin, recently published a novel called *Shadow over the Land* (I should mention that I've taught fiction-writing at New York University for eight years). Dwoskin's novel showed the menace of American fascism through the efforts of a race-hating, American First type of organization to take over a city in the neighborhood of Boston. This novel has been banned in Boston for obscenity. Hearst has several times during his obscenity campaign mentioned "objectionable ideologies," and indicated clearly that he would like to make a clean sweep. But the root answer to the question is the fact that it is reaction itself that is conducting the anti-filth campaign.

Readers have as much to lose in the campaign against progressive writers as the writers themselves. Unless readers act in support of these writers, the time will come when, as George Bernard Shaw said, "Nobody is allowed to read any books except the books nobody can read."

It must be said seriously that just as Jews and radicals were imprisoned, tortured and killed in Germany, and then trade unionists,

liberals, scientists, writers, etc. as well as Catholic and Protestant ministers — so in the present anti-filth campaign, first so-called obscene novels will be attacked, and then any novels dealing honestly with the American scene, and finally every expression of liberal thought, every instance of resistance to the reactionaries who want war on the human race at home and abroad. Just as “degenerate art” was linked by Hitler with “degenerate democracy” — everything the “leader” doesn’t like is denounced as decadent and degenerate — so here in America we will have to reckon with degenerate novels being linked with degenerate progressive politics, and, if we allow this quiet (or noisy) campaign to succeed, we will suddenly find ourselves without any progressives. It might be said, at the worst, that as soon as real progressivism and real democracy disappear in any country, a really degenerate literature, a literature of mass filth and despair, pours in to fill the vacuum. During the war, the German leadership deliberately coupled pornography and propaganda in their program against their own people and against the enemy, namely, us. Their party anthem was the Horst Wessel Song, and their middle name was smut. (Check with available data on the German short-wave radio.)

Mr. Hearst says that writers do not have “respectable standards” and that they write for “money.” It is my belief that the great number of American writers, while hoping to make a living, are devoted to the cause of a good life for the human race. In that cause, they unfortunately have to take time out to fight “the virtuous lust for suppression.”

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Postscript on the subject of suppression: Last summer, when I was teaching at the University of New Hampshire, a Boston Hearst paper sent a reporter to ask me for a statement on the Hearst anti-filth campaign. I wrote a short statement, moderately worded, and asked that it be used verbatim, if at all. It was not used. I happen to know that the reporter did, in good faith, submit the statement to the paper.

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THE TELEVISION SCRIPT

EDWIN S. MILLS JR.

A MONTH or so ago, the trade papers buzzed with the announcement of Sylvan Simon's handsome purchase for pictures of an original story, written for television and produced as the first of NBC's "Broadway Preview" series. It was a quietly historic moment. A television original had hit the big leagues.

There on Page One of Variety was testament that television was far enough along to showcase a writer's story, and market it for him by beaming it over the air to Broadway and Hollywood story buyers, by special arrangement with the Author's League and Dramatist's Guild. The announcement didn't claim that television would do it every time. The big news was that television could, and had. As the check was signed, it might well have marked the unobtrusive beginning of the era of the television writer.

Whether that era is just around the corner, or a few desultory decades away would get even money, even within the ranks of television itself. But no one will argue the fact that television, like radio and the screen, will require its own trained writers. It's the trickiest medium of them all. And one will get you ten that as sponsors flock to the video channels, "television writers" with a weather eye cocked toward selling their story to pictures will begin to sing a specialist's song.

There are many in the new industry itself who believe that those who talk about specialized television talent are talking into an old, brown fedora. Film, they say, is the thing. Motion pictures, which have

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proven themselves, which can never blow a line or miss a cue, will furnish the sponsor with all the big-time program fare his schedule could require. Perhaps radio and screen writers or actors may shift employers, they say, but never techniques.

The cockeyed economics of television don't substantiate this line of thinking very well. No matter how you slice the budget, film production is a phenomenally expensive business. Unless a major miracle occurs, there's no likelihood whatsoever that 16,000 U. S. motion picture exhibitors will permit the major studios to release features to television until the nitrate is worn off the celluloid. They know well that television is their arch enemy, and since cash from their tills is what keeps Hollywood in sables, it seems reasonable to believe that their say will have its way for many, many years to come.

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Television's film, therefore, must be made for television — or perhaps for television and the 16mm circuits. If television is to follow radio's pattern of weekly shows, it would mean a sponsor interested in dramatic or variety shows would have to kick in a rock-bottom minimum of, say \$7500 a reel, or for a half-hour show, \$22,500 a week. And if talent of any repute were used, this figure should be at least trebled, or quadrupled. That's a lot of cash for one 30-minute spot, even if everybody in the country had a television set.

Television shows, however, go on in one piece — a point to be developed in a minute. They aren't assembled shot by shot, setup by setup, take by take, as film is. They are rehearsed, and then go on the air in one, solid whole. The difference in production costs, naturally, is enormous; the difference in quality of performance sometimes surprisingly small. And with top talent and expert production, a sponsor could get an hour — or six reels' worth — of program for a figure well under what one reel of film would cost him. And since, very shortly, it will be possible to photograph that television show perfectly as it comes over the television system, the sponsor has a film package which can be mailed to all operating television stations.

Further, when network television is ready, four or five years hence, his cost will be still cheaper. Unless the various talent guilds top by many hundred percent Mr. Petrillo's recent stand regarding transcribed talent

costs, there would seem to be little question that for tomorrow, the transcribed live television production, and for the day after tomorrow, network live productions, will hog the television schedules. It makes financial sense.

The economics of television, in other words, seems to point unmistakably toward the development of a specialized television talent field. And of all the talent crafts, the writer is the most directly affected, after the director. Far more than in any other medium, the writer's technical skill, or lack of it, affects the quality of the performance. Television production, particularly on a weekly schedule, is a hurried, harried business. The writer who understands why, and by his writing eliminates the production problems which harass television directors and producers, will earn their grateful blessing, and their next assignment. He will be a television writer. If he saves the director time, and the producer money, he will be a very popular gentleman around television's house.

The television script, which must play visually, as in the theatre, and before cameras, as in pictures, must be produced, rehearsed, and presented within a week, as in radio. The vital safety valve of time, with which the other two visual media can endow themselves, is virtually barred to television. Naturally, therefore, a writer who can construct a television screenplay which will automatically stage itself before the peculiar demands of television camera-work, is donating to the director hours and hours of television's most precious commodity. In sparing the director a couple of long evening's bothersome adaptation, he's contributing precious extra hours for plotting camera movements, or rehearsal. Inversely, the writer whose script needs reworking, rebuilding, rephrasing is stealing from the director something he hasn't got, like robbing a pauper of his only nickel. The value of the production is accordingly jeopardized.

It's therefore vital for the television writer to understand the demands of the television screen — the receiving screen. For the television director must stage his show always for the smallest of the home receivers. Everything that happens in the studio is, or should be, conceived in terms of that receiver, and its family audience.

Most television studios will have from two to five cameras, probably all of them on dollies, and it's the director's job to study his screenplay,

and decide where all five of those cameras will be, at all times, during the performance. So while rehearsing his cast, the director must block their movements so as to coincide with the pre-plotted movements of his cameras; he may prefer to block out both at the same time. By the time his show goes on the air, he must know what every camera is doing, and where it goes next. Although he probably has a technical director or production assistant to supervise the actual moving of the cameras, the responsibility of their being where he wants them, when he wants them, is his.

These details of camera movement, of cutting from angle to angle, of close shot and medium shot aren't the concern of the television screen-play, or the writer; those are the director's headaches. But the way in which the television receiver and its family audience **affect** camera movements must be the very real concern of the writer. A day spent watching a good director block out his camera movements, and a couple of evenings spent watching good and bad television dramas from five feet away would prove the point.

The smallness of that screen demands that the director keep his cameras as close to his actors as possible, or else their facial expressions will be lost. Translated into script demands, this quality of television affects dialogue, action, cast size, and even construction. It makes the two-scene almost obligatory, whenever humanly possible, no matter how many characters are on the stage. It discourages three-scenes or four-scenes, because to get any satisfactory detail, the camera must be close, and the actors will look bunched together like the King Cole trio. Obviously, it asks for as many long speeches — for long closeups — as the action will bear. Equally obviously, it argues against dialogue from many people scattered around a room, requiring a long shot, or a series of dis-orienting cuts from speaker to speaker.

A writer who learns to pick out one spot in a room, and let his action eddy in and out of that spot, helps the director immensely. Perhaps simpler, and just as effective to the camera, is to write his scene so that one character is constantly in the dialogue, meaning that the action will play to that character, and the camera can follow him. Still another suggestion is that the writer write for his camera: he could visualize each scene he's about to write as if it were to be photographed by but one

constantly-moving camera. The other cameras become fillers, then. They embellish the scene with angles, cross-shots, and particularly closeups, instead of having to provide the scene.

It is the characteristics of home reception which determine story choice, its treatment, and length. For the television audience sits watching their sets in familiar home surroundings, probably with lamps burning. It isn't the escape-filled, dark, never-never land of the Palace; it's home. Young Susan may begin to wail, the telephone and doorbell will ring, the groceries will be delivered.

Although at any time of day, the hypnotic effect of moving figures on the screen will insure more attention than the radio speaker might, television still runs radio's risk of a switch to another station. The show's free; nobody forked out half a buck to see it. The audience can afford to be more captious. The writer should be more compelling.

Obviously, a moody, suspenseful drama dependent on tension runs the consistent danger of having its careful build spoiled by domestic interruption (particularly if it isn't filled with one engrossing full-face closeup after another). It should try to achieve its mood immediately, and hold it high up to the moment the killer's discovered. A light, warm story won't lose its audience's mood as quickly when someone drops a Scotch bottle in the kitchen. But it should avoid comedy which is brittle or dependent on atmosphere, aiming instead at the homey intimacy of the successful radio programs, or the Hardy films. Naturally, stories which lend themselves to the caress of the closeup are the best, and for better or for worse, radio's soap operas are superb examples of closeup writing. Character stories, with the warm, lovable old lady or gent, are comparative naturals, since they combine desirable hominess with situations which lend themselves to close-in photography.

Home reception, which means the use of the public airwaves, brings television, like radio, under the FCC scrutiny, and radio's policy code. Immediately, this knocks out anything but the most superficially controversial story. Racial problems, political issues, any kind of class or international mud-slinging, taboo subjects such as alcoholism, perversion, and the rest of the chamber of conservative horrors are as dreadful to television as to radio.

Television stations are already taking the same pattern of owner-

ship as radio; the occasional liberal station owner will be as rare as his confreres of the press. And anyhow, the advertisers will supply the money for the shows, which portends the light, slick fare which is endorsed by Messrs. Hooper and Gallup.

So far, no one seems to be quite sure how the home audience would like to take their television shows: in short bits, very long bits, or the fifteen, thirty, and sixty minute slots of commercial radio. Every length has been tried, but it's indicated that because the audience is sitting at home, an hour is long enough.

Up to now, television programmers haven't yet arrived at the era of strict, split-second scheduling, but since advertisers must buy time, it can be expected in the not too far distant future, with one very possible change from radio. It has been discovered that a twenty-minute program is a little more pleasing than its fifteen minute counterpart on radio, and it wouldn't be surprising if many a daytime hour were filled with three programs instead of four. To the dramatic writer, this means a couple of important extra minutes to finish an installment of a story, or to end his one-act-play satisfactorily.



There are ways, important ways, the writer can save the director his precious time. How can the writer help save the producer money? It's obvious, perhaps, but it's vitally important, for the budget factor of television is unquestionably the most controversial area of the new industry. Since television's sole revenue will be from the time-buying advertiser, the network or station owners — while making him pay somewhat more per advertising dollar because of the medium's immense selling power — must provide him with programs which are not ridiculously out of kilter with the rates of radio, magazines, and other media of advertising. That's tough to do.

Although none of the talent guilds have as yet made up their minds where to place minimums, it's rather apparent that since television requires more from all talent involved, the rates will be higher than radio. Big time television, although cheaper by far than motion pictures, as pointed out, is still a whale of an expensive business.

Once more, characteristics of the medium vitally affect story choice, and even story handling. This time, it's economics and not electronics

which argue for small casts, simple sets, simple props, and simple production. The stress is squarely on the writer's shoulders; since the assistance from production is diminished in a cheap show, his story, his dialogue and action should be proportionately stronger and better. The gent who develops the knack of good, tight three- or four-character stories, played in a \$50 set, gripping enough to sustain a couple of name stars for half an hour's playing, will be as popular with television producers as the sponsor himself.

There's no reason why television producers, who in all likelihood will be agency men, shouldn't pay an extra bonus to the writer who gives them a good cheap show. Following the system now widely used in the field of commercial films, the producer and the writer would benefit from a budget-contract basis wherein the proven writer is permitted \$0000 for his show, from which sum production costs are deducted, leaving the writer what's left over as his fee. It's a kind of incentive plan which gives a writer a chance to earn considerably more than a flat fee might bring; it's not unlikely that whatever guild assumes television jurisdiction will give the plan a whirl, for it delights the agencies.

There aren't many **ifs** left in television. With 50,000 sets rolling off production lines every month, with an estimated 25 stations due on the air in 1947 and 100 by 1948, the main questions are **how** and **when** it will pay off in ten-thousand dollar bills.

Any writer who has an idea of trying to hit television today for bread and butter either has more rich uncles or more crusading spirit than most of the profession can summon. Furthermore, talent is talent. The ground-floor business, the get-in-now department doesn't mean much in the talent fields: a writer can learn television writing in a month or two. But the fact remains that a new field's a-coming. A new era for writers has started. Those who play with it now will be getting their feet wet in an almost completely uncharted sea. The men will turn up one of these days with the big-moneyed "naturals." Others will sell their television plays to pictures. Still others will dream up ways of making shows cheaper.

From here on in, it's going to be quite a sight to watch. Whoever strikes it first is a virgin. No other medium can make that statement.

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SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD, INC.

1655 NO. CHEROKEE AVE., HOLLYWOOD 28, CALIFORNIA
AFFILIATED WITH AUTHORS' LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.

OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE BOARD, THE SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD: PRESIDENT, EMMET LAVERY; 1ST VICE-PRESIDENT, MARY McCALL, JR.; 2ND VICE-PRESIDENT, HOWARD ESTABROOK; 3RD VICE-PRESIDENT, HUGO BUTLER; SECRETARY, F. HUGH HERBERT; TREASURER, HAROLD BUCHMAN. EXECUTIVE BOARD: MELVILLE BAKER, HAROLD BUCHMAN, HUGO BUTLER, JAMES M. CAIN, LESTER COLE, PHILIP DUNNE, HOWARD ESTABROOK, F. HUGH HERBERT, TALBOT JENNINGS, RING LARDNER, JR., RANALD MacDOUGALL, MARY McCALL, JR., GEORGE SEATON, LEO TOWNSEND. ALTERNATES: MAURICE RAPF, GORDON KAHN, ISOBEL LENNART, VALENTINE DAVIES, HENRY MYERS, DAVID HERTZ, COUNSEL, MORRIS E. COHN. ASSISTANT SECRETARY, ALICE PENNEMAN.

S . W . G . B U L L E T I N

Interim Report of the Authors' League Committee on Licensing and Secondary Rights:

On September 18th, 1946, at the request of the Screen Writers' Guild and with the unanimous approval of The Authors' League Council, Elmer Rice, President of the League, appointed a Committee consisting of the presidents of the Guilds comprising the League, with himself as chairman, to study the possibility of bringing about improvements in the economic position of writers. These improvements, specifically named at the Council meeting which endorsed the creation of the Committee, are: The leasing of writers' creations instead of their outright sale, and the stoppage of the blanket disposal of secondary rights in authors' works.

These long desired objectives of the League had been given a revival of interest by the proposal of James M. Cain that an Authors' Authority be established by the League and its Guilds as an agency to control the leasing of writers' works. The Screen Writers' Guild had "approved in principle the Cain plan," but the phrase had been misinterpreted by many as an unqualified endorsement of all phases of the plan, which Mr. Cain him-

self said was offered as a means toward an end for study and criticism, not as a perfected instrument ready for endorsement and operation.

As any instrument requiring the consolidated support of the League can become operative only after it has received the endorsement of the Councils and the majority vote of the membership of each Guild, the plan was submitted to the League and turned over to the League Committee for study. Even before the League Committee was appointed, a subcommittee of the Screen Writers' Guild consisting of Mr. Cain and other members had already recognized the need for modifications and alterations in the Authority Plan. These and subsequent considerations of the Screen Writers' Guild Committee were communicated to the League Committee which wishes to acknowledge their continued helpful cooperation.

The League Committee recognizes many objectionable features in the Authority Plan's proposals for compulsory membership, assignment of copyright, however limited, and other provisions of questionable legality. It believes these objections can be overcome only when

we find the solution of the licensing and subsidiary rights problem within the League itself.

Fortunately the charter of the League permits the establishment within its own structure of a licensing system which among other virtues would preclude the possibility of any editorial control of writers' works or dictatorship by individuals, confining itself exclusively to clearly specified business limitations. Its nature would be analogous to that of the Minimum Basic Agreement of The Dramatists Guild in protecting the complete freedom of expression by authors, concerning itself exclusively with the maintenance of minimum guarantees by lessors of authors' rights.

Like The Dramatists Guild agreement it would state specifically the terms and conditions under which rights are acquirable, time limitations under which rights revert to authors, etc., and be utterly free of susceptibility to political or economic pressures. Any changes in its content would be made under conditions as protective as those now provided by The Dramatists Guild. The Committee believes that by earnest and careful regard for the rights of all signatory authors and

those who commercialize their productions an agreement can be achieved.

This is the line of planning being followed by the Committee of the four Guilds and the League. The ground, so to speak, has been cleared. The League must and can provide the space and facilities for whatever is to be erected on the site. The next step is to insure the operability of whatever is planned.

The Committee will present its recommendations as soon as they have reached the blueprint stage.

LETTER TO WILLIAM POMERANCE

The Executive Board of the Screen Writers' Guild has written the following letter to William Pomerance, who resigned as executive secretary of the Guild November 26 after serving more than two years in that position:

Dear Bill:

It is with deep regret that the Executive Board of the Screen Writers' Guild accepts your resignation as Executive Secretary.

During your tenure of office, you have

SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD STUDIO CHAIRMEN

COLUMBIA — **Melvin Levy**; alternates: Ted Thomas, Ray Schrock.

MGM — **Irving Brecher, Chairman**; Sidney Boehm, Marvin Borowsky, Anne Chapin, Margaret Fitts, Charles Kaufman, Gladys Lehman.

REPUBLIC — **Franklin Adreon**; alternate, John K. Butler.

20th CENTURY-FOX — **Wanda Tuchock**; alternate, Richard Murphy.

WARNER BROS. — **Edwin Gilbert**; alternate, John Collier.

PARAMOUNT — **Arthur Sheekman**; alternate, Jesse Lasky, Jr.

UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL — **Silvia Richards**; alternates, Howard Dimsdale, Ian Hunter.

RKO — **Daniel Mainwaring**; alternate, Bess Taffel.

faithfully discharged the routine duties of your office. More important, you have done much to strengthen the Guild, particularly in bringing working members, through lot meetings, into closer contact with the many problems which day by day face the Executive Board. You deserve special credit for your vision and effort in initiating and carrying to maturity our Guild magazine, "The Screen Writer," and for the tremendous contribution you have made to the development of an American Authors' Authority. The Guild as it stands today owes much to

your wisdom, patience and capacity for hard and often unrewarded work.

We fully understand and appreciate your conviction that you can be of greater service to peace in labor relations and democratic trade unionism in Hollywood by working in another field, and you carry with you our best wishes for your success. We shall miss you sorely.

With all our best wishes,

Sincerely,

EXECUTIVE BOARD

by F. Hugh Herbert, Secretary.



ATTENTION: SWG ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

It is believed that a certain number of associate members of the Screen Writers' Guild, particularly among those working in the independent field or outside of the major studios, may qualify for active membership. The Guild office cannot effect such transfers, since it does not have complete employment records on members other than those employed by the majors.

All associate members are urged to have themselves transferred to active membership as soon as they become eligible. Any members who think they so qualify, but are not sure, can have their cases straightened out by communicating with Miss Ruth Roth at the Guild office.

You can qualify for ACTIVE membership if, (A) within the last two years you have received, on motion pictures produced in the United States, either one screen credit for writing a screenplay on a feature length picture, or two screen credits for writing an original story, or three screen credits for writing a screenplay or original story on short subjects, or have been employed or engaged during such time as a screen writer in the motion picture industry in the United States for a period of twenty-six weeks, consecutively or non-consecutively; (B) you are now employed in the motion picture industry or have had a screen credit as a writer within the last three months AND you have had experience as a writer in the Service of the United States or in industrial or educational films, within the last year, equivalent to the qualifications listed in (A).

If you have been an active member and were transferred to associate, you need only thirteen weeks employment during a two-year period to qualify you for active membership again.

ROBERT E. SHERWOOD ON THE A.A.A.

And a Note on the Juke Box Theory of Screen Writing

ROBERT E. SHERWOOD

Returning to movie work for the first time since 1939, I found that recognition of the importance of the writing in motion pictures is far greater than it has ever been before, but the position of screen writers in the Hollywood hierarchy is still lamentably low.

Of course, there are all kinds of screen writers—including some who have never been near a film studio but have contributed valuable stories to the movie mills, and others who live in Hollywood and own swimming pools and seldom write a word. There are also some eminent playwrights and novelists who go to Southern California occasionally to pick up a bit of change and a sun-tan but who are always careful to make it known that they are there on a strictly temporary basis. (I know of one who was there "temporarily" for sixteen years.)

However, I am talking not of the fortunate few but of the plodding many who work on salary and who are largely responsible for the quality of the scripts without which no producer could produce, no director could direct, no star could shine.

Also, I am not airing any personal grudge. Complaints would come with ill grace from me, for I have been given the best of the breaks on the last two screen-writing jobs I have done—with David Selznick and Alfred Hitchcock in 1939, and with Samuel Goldwyn and William

Wyler this year. But I have been one of the temporaries and my own experience has been all too exceptional.

Some of the full-time screen writers have achieved the dignity that they deserve, and the freedom that they require, by the process of graduating from the status of mere writers to the eminence of producers or directors, or both. Notable among these are Robert Riskin, Preston Sturges, Dudley Nichols, Nunnally Johnson, Charles Brackett and Billy Wilder. (There is also a case of a producer, David Selznick, becoming a writer—which is all right, too.)

But this is only a part-way solution. The screen writer, as such, should be in a position where he may work and if need be battle with the producer and director on equal terms. He is not in such a position, or anywhere near it, except when a generous producer permits him to be.

If you study the motion-picture scripts of "David Copperfield," "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town," "Wuthering Heights," "Gone With the Wind," "The Grapes of Wrath"—and compare them with their originals—you will gain some conception of the extraordinarily complex process involved. Such words as "translation" or "adaptation" are too weak to describe this process. It is a kind of transmutation. It is easier with novels or short stories than it is with plays, which are necessarily written to fit into a deliberately constricted area.

Indeed, there have not been many

ROBERT E. SHERWOOD, SWG member, is a screen writer of distinction and the author of a long list of famous stage plays.

great motion pictures which were based on plays — a memorable exception being "Henry V," in which Laurence Olivier proved that Shakespeare was a great screen writer, although the bard didn't know it at the time. The limitless imagination, the poetic enchantment, the soaring freedom of the Elizabethan drama (before theatres had roofs) provide the ideal for the screen play of the future — and when I say screen play, I mean one which is written directly for the screen and not a second-hand, expurgated version of a story written for another medium.

A long time ago, before the cinema found its tongue, I was a movie critic, and a pretty caustic one at that. I started then arguing that the motion picture would never realize its true greatness as a medium of expression until it had developed its own writing talent and thus ceased to depend upon novels or magazine stories or stage plays for its material. Later on, when I became a playwright, I was of course as glad as the next one to sell my efforts to the movie producers. But the argument still stands. Indeed, under present conditions, it has gained greatly in cogency and in urgency.

Intelligent producers are well aware of the fact that no matter how many celebrated stars or directors they may hire, or how many Broadway smash-hits or best-sellers they may buy, they depend ultimately on the ability and the enthusiasm of the men and women on their payrolls who pound out the working scripts. But, despite this awareness, too many of them persist in regarding their hired writers as literary juke-boxes which will automatically give forth the desired medley when enough nickels have been inserted.

The Screen Writers Guild has fought valiantly to remedy various injustices and to get a fair deal for writers in their dealings with their employers. But the guild has not yet been able to tackle the basic problem of employment itself.

The major complaint of the screen

writer is not that he is underpaid: it is that while he has responsibility for his work, he has no real authority over it.

This is a legitimate complaint and one to which the producers, in their own interests, must pay serious heed. The future of their industry in an increasingly competitive world market will depend to a very great extent on the quality of the writing done in their own studios.

Some time ago that interesting monthly, *The Screen Writer*, published an article by James M. Cain presenting a proposal for an American Authors Authority. This has evoked considerable controversy, in the course of which it has been suggested that the real author of this plan was not Mr. Cain but Uncle Joe Stalin.

However, if the Cain proposal is really Marxist in intent, then it is an extraordinarily subtle document. It provides protection for the literary "capitalists" — the creators of original material (novels, stories, plays). It does not apply at all to the "wage-slaves" — the screen writers who work on salary.

I have been in both categories, capitalist and wage-slave, and I have learned, as everyone who works in Hollywood is bound to learn, that the latter category is by far the more important to the quality of motion pictures in general. A good screen writer can take a mediocre story and convert it into a fine movie; an unskilled and unimaginative or frustrated screen writer can convert a good story into something awful.

If you could take a list of the great motion pictures of recent years, and could make a fair division of credit as between the authors of the original stories and of the screen plays, I believe the over-all score would be at least 75-25 in favor of the screen writers. (So would the blame for some of Hollywood's more conspicuous horrors.)

The screen writer's responsibility is clear and his livelihood is dependent upon his identification with success. How-

ever, he has no assurance whatsoever that a story on which he has worked will be produced as he wrote it. By the time production starts, he may have been assigned to another story, or he may have had to seek other employment. His script may be subjected to all kinds of mutilation and distortion without his knowledge.

In the theatre, the playwright has the right to approve the manager's selection of the director and the cast of his play, the contract stating that such approval is not to be "unreasonably" withheld. He is present at rehearsals, if he wishes to be, and at the pre-Broadway try-outs when final revisions are made. Nothing is changed without his consent.

The screen writer normally has no more to say about the final treatment of his work than does the juke-box after the last nickel has run out.

Of course, production in motion pictures is immeasurably more complex and expensive than in the theatre. But there must be a way to establish and maintain the principle that the writer's interest in and control over his work does not end when the script is finally okayed and sent to the mimeograph department.

This is a problem which will not be solved easily, and certainly not by me. The solution will depend upon the strength and unity of the Screen Writers Guild working in close alliance with the Screen Actors and Screen Directors Guilds — rather than with the Dramatists or Authors Guilds, whose interests are largely dissimilar.

Mention of screen actors and directors

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WRITING AND MOTION PICTURE COURSES

People's Educational Center at 1717 N. Vine, Phone HOLLYWOOD 6291, announces its winter term begins January 20th. There will be a continuation of the various courses in screen and radio writing, advertising copy writing, novel, short story and playwriting. Screen Writers' Guild members Robert Lees, Val Burton, Henry Blankfort, Guy Endore, John Sanford, Michael Simmons, Arnold Manoff and Ben Barzman will participate in lead-

ing various classes. The motion picture direction course with Irving Pichel, Herbert Biberman, Edward Dmytryk, Hugo Friedhofer, Kenneth MacGowan, Vincent Sherman and others will continue. A new course offered by the Center is The Motion Pictures — Illusion and Reality, a lecture course at the Screen Cartoonists' Hall on Tuesday nights which will survey the main aspects of motion pictures today as an industry and as an art form.

brings to mind the extraordinary contrast between Hollywood's triumphs and its failures. Consider the wealth of talent that has been discovered and developed entirely within the American motion-picture industry — actors, directors, producers, cameramen, designers, musicians and technicians of all kinds. (I started to write a list of names but it is far too long, so I shall cut it to five: Charlie Chaplin, David Wark Griffith, Frank Capra, Ingrid Bergman and Walt Disney.)

Even that brief list emphasizes the fact that Hollywood has not been restricted by narrow nationalism. It succeeded as a League of Nations where Geneva failed. It quickly gained domination of the world market largely because it deserved to.

But — who are the writers discovered and developed by Hollywood during the past thirty years? Very few are known to the public, and virtually all of those few had established reputations before they ever went to work in the film factories. Hollywood has remained a borrower rather than a creator of story material and writing talent. It has persisted in the misapprehension that while the script may be important, its author isn't. And that is precisely why there is so much unimportance in so many of Hollywood's products.

(Editor's Note: This article by Robert E. Sherwood is reprinted from the New York Times by permission of Mr. Sherwood and the Times. Since it contains an analysis of the American Authors' Authority, it is published here in place of the usual survey of AAA press comment).

IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH HOLLYWOOD STORY VALUES?

A Symposium on Samuel Goldwyn's Recent Statement That Hollywood Pictures Have Gone Stale

Emmet Lavery

Mr. Goldwyn should not be taken too seriously, even by himself. He is beating a dog of his own creation.

Just so long as Mr. Goldwyn—and most of the studios in Hollywood—use writers to rewrite the rewrites of other writers, just so long will films lack individual integrity and originality.

I grant readily that films, by their nature, are a distinctly collaborative undertaking. I concede that at their best they are much more a group activity than the writing of a play or a novel, that they represent ideally the kind of team work that is involved in the orchestration of a fine symphony. But they still don't have to be a collaborative compromise.

The tragedy of Hollywood is not the scarcity of good scripts or of good writers. The tragedy of Hollywood is that the studios discard every year many scripts that are far better than the ones they finally produce. Out of this tremendous discard, you could find enough material any year to satisfy the most demanding critics and the most appreciative audiences.

The trouble is that Hollywood still thinks that, if one writer is good, two or twenty are still better. The result is a cumulative confusion, the inevitable inability of a producer to decide whether he likes version one or version twenty—the best.

If the studios want pictures of individual integrity and individual identity, they have to encourage those qualities first among the writers. You can't destroy it in the writers and then look for it in films.

EMMET LAVERY is the well-known playwright and screen writer. He is president of the Screen Writers Guild.

Howard Estabrook

Is Samuel Goldwyn an opportunist or is he sincere? A sly glance at Mr. Goldwyn's bulging publicity files might reveal curious coincidences: when he visits New York in connection with the launching of an important new motion picture, he usually launches a striking press statement.

On the recent occasion Mr. Goldwyn had a double objective; he intended to visit London as well as New York, so a simple solution would be to denounce Hollywood pictures and praise British pictures.

But the only questions really at issue are: is Mr. Goldwyn merely gathering timely publicity or is he sincere? Is there a grain of truth in the rocks that he has just hurled at Hollywood movies?

The answers are that he is both timely and sincere, and that there is some truth in what he says. That is why it arouses our picture industry and delights the press which indulgently circulates his periodic pronouncements.

Despite the group of really excellent pictures which Hollywood produces each year, we must sympathize deeply and profoundly with anyone who is forced to witness all the pictures Hollywood makes—imagine the poor censor's mother cooling his fevered brow. But who would want to read all the books put out each year? Or see all the plays tried out?

Mr. Goldwyn says Hollywood has run dry and is living on ideas borrowed from the past.

To provide fresh motion pictures, the first necessary ingredients are fresh stories, and this brings up the entire question of motion picture story properties. At present it is impossible for an author to acquire statutory copyright protection for his own story written for motion pic-

tures unless the story is published. An attempt to provide for copyright of screenplay manuscripts, as is provided for stage plays, was defeated in Washington by a powerful lobby. The finished film, however, may be copyrighted. Obviously this reduces the status of the screen author; likewise it diminishes the incentive for the author to create fresh stories directly for pictures. Also this tends to make producing companies the custodians of story ideas and story properties, because the producers can protect priority for a story subject in manuscript by the very simple move of registering a description of it with their own producers' association, which by mutual agreement for a term prevents any other producer from attempting that subject, and by extension obviously deters any author from exercising his natural rights to treat that subject for the screen, because he might find the market closed.

Full freedom for authors exists in the field of the dramatic theatre and in the field of books, where there are no systems of private registration to preempt any subject or type of story.

When a screen author shall be as free to copyright the manuscript of a motion picture story as a playwright is free to copyright his work merely by filing two copies of his typewritten manuscript in Washington, and when the market cannot be closed by private registry, then more great stories will be written directly for the screen.

Mr. Goldwyn says that most pictures remind you of other pictures.

When a producer has acquired perpetual ownership of a story subject and has produced a successful picture based on it, nothing is simpler than to wait until a new crop of movie-goers grows up, (estimated at once every five years), when he can inspect the old picture and pick the brains of its writers by utilizing that same subject matter, or parts of it, or paraphrases of it, in a new version and reproduced under a new title as an alleged "new" picture. This is done more often than is suspected, and many pic-

tures are treading in alleged safety along the path of the "proven values" of the past; cycles are created, trends are revived, monotony is maintained. The query: "Have you got a good prize fight story?" or "a good psychological murder story?" — should be revised to: "Have you got a good story?"

Mr. Goldwyn says there are not enough good writers with a real story to tell . . . on the writer hinges the true quality of any picture, no matter who the producer, director or star.

No one, not even Mr. Goldwyn, would pretend that all pictures could be made top grade — but everyone should admit they could be better.

Assuredly the story and screenplay are the foundation of any picture, but nearly all screen writers are at present largely subordinated as salaried employees with few rights except the salary check which is supposed to be so satisfactory that it will compensate for any abridgement of integrity. Authors from other fields, after a taste of this, have fled from Hollywood. But producers would rather pay large sums in salaries, whether wasted or not, than permit a screen writer to become a true author with real rights and compensation only according to the merit of his work through percentage royalties. The result of the sure-thing salaries is that with 350 or 400 studio writing jobs available in Hollywood at any one time, there are now over 1400 members of the Screen Writers Guild and the number is increasing steadily. This suggests hundreds more writers hovering like moths around the golden flame, with hundreds getting singed and discovering that all that glitters tastes bitter when seasoned with the shocking statistics of unemployment in Hollywood. But additional writers are continually being imported; could this be on the theory that volume may overcome the lack of qualified new story ideas from qualified writers, of which Mr. Goldwyn complains?

And how many Hollywood writers will refuse money? — as it is said Henry Wadsworth Longfellow did when offered

\$1000 to write a poem on the death of President Garfield, saying he had no inspiration for it, one can't turn on the tap and get a poem. Perhaps too many writers are turning on the tap, simply because there is a salary check—which will never lift the level of pictures as Mr. Goldwyn urges.

Eventually it may be possible that progressive producers will encourage writers to create screenplays on their own time by granting royalties to such writers. Also someone may devise an arrangement for compensation based on merit of studio writers, such as nominal salary against percentage for writers working on studio owned stories, to be based upon the work which actually appears in the finished picture. These steps would in the long run effect great savings for producers and would encourage writers who create superior writings by compensating them liberally.

Mr. Goldwyn says British pictures are making great progress . . . they are getting closer to the people.

British screen authors have freedoms unknown in Hollywood. In most of Europe, full statutory copyright protection is automatically granted for every creative work from the moment the work is completed, without any further formality. But certainly all British pictures are not good—far from it. It so happens that recently selected British exports have struck a vein of reality which makes some of Hollywood's phony reality look rather shoddy.

The entire matter of Hollywood stories and writing problems may be summarized by the significance of the enormous story and screenplay inventories of producing companies, who have shelves filled with unproduced and in many cases unproducible manuscripts for which they have paid literally millions of dollars, much of it in salaries to writers who wrote under assignment, and much of it in hasty purchases to acquire and maintain story controls. But profits are such that these losses are disregarded in the alleged greater gains of barring the writer or any one else from invading the domain of literary properties, which remains under

studio control. The future will reveal whether writers will escape the salary narcotic and become full participants in the Hollywood domain, with an enforceable copyright and percentage royalties.

"Gilded peonage," as a book on the subject terms it, is the lure to writers, the ostensible protection of producers, and the actual blind stifling of motion picture progress in Hollywood.

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Will these conditions change soon? Be calm. Not while the profits continue. Mr. Goldwyn says Hollywood is too rich and too lazy. Does he mean too lazy to estimate foreign competition?—or too lazy to remember that an entertainment known to history as vaudeville once dominated these United States, with fabulous profits, until it collapsed from inner weakness as well as outer competition?

But even Mr. Goldwyn might not try to change the industry as long as profits soar and foreign markets are maintained. It's difficult to argue with a million dollars, until it's the last million.

HOWARD ESTABROOK, 2nd Vice-President of SWG, is a screen writer and director of long standing, with an Academy Award and a distinguished list of famous screen plays to his credit.

Nunnally Johnson

I would like very much to write something for the Screen Writer, which seems to me to have the liveliest and most worthwhile contents I've ever seen in a professional magazine, but I'm afraid I haven't much to say about Goldwyn's statement on Hollywood. Nobody can contend with his courageous announcement that what this business needs is new ideas. Who couldn't say that about any place or any business at any time?

NUNNALLY JOHNSON is a motion picture producer and the author of many of America's most famous screen plays.

Kenneth Macgowan

Goldwyn and Zanuck are both right. Hollywood has run dry of ideas. And Hollywood is making some fine pictures.

Goldwyn might just as well have said

that Hollywood has always been dry of ideas. By and large, the best of our screen writers don't write original stories for the screen, and those of five and ten years ago didn't do so either. Nichols, Trotti, Riskin, Lord, Binyon, Buchman, the Hacketts turn out fifteen adaptations to the screen against one original screenplay — and the one lone screenplay is usually a transcription of the story of a dead man like Wilson or of a living fact like Nazi brutality; it is not a fresh and creative contribution to our sense of life and character. Novelists and playwrights working steadily or from time to time in Hollywood, such as Faulkner, Trumbo, Longstreet, Lavery, Sherwood, Brackett, Balderston, Hellman, Raphaelson, Scott, Faragoh, Connelly, and Johnson, seldom create new stories for the screen.

Plenty of "originals" get written, of course, but they are usually the work of the less accomplished or less successful writers. They are run-of-the-mill boy-gets-girl stories, or they exploit such news events as the omnipresence of Kilroy.

Why don't our best writers contribute new fiction to the films? Are they afraid of seeing their ideas twisted and distorted to suit the prejudices of producers or the personalities of stars? Or are they lazy? Or don't the studios want them to create?

Hollywood does turn out fine pictures — pictures with emotional drive, real characters, a sense of life. But the trouble is that these pictures are 99 99/100% pure novels or plays or biographies. The same week that Zanuck gave out his statement, 20th Century-Fox took ten pages in *The Motion Picture Herald* to advertise fifteen new films based on novels and ten current ones off the same bookshelf.

Hollywood is a *rara avis*. It puts a "Vacancy" sign over its nest and invites that fecund cuckoo the best-selling novelist to come lay its eggs.

KENNETH MACGOWAN, former New York drama critic and theatrical and motion picture producer for many years, now heads the Department of Theatre Arts at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Allen Boretz

Up with the notions rich with corn, nude of ideas as September morn, the custard pies of rhetoric stand, keel-hauled by the chill producers hand. Round about him ideas sweep, grappling each with problems deep, on a pleasant morn of early fall, while we talked story and paced the hall, out of my mouthings, winding down, one took root and he went to town.

No more gags for the willful stars, no more bags drunk at chi-chi bars, trapped in his storming wind: he spun, and noon looked down to find us one. Up rose old notions to retch him then, bowed with their four score years and ten; gravely he took his rhetoric down, and turned as before he had gone to town; by his office window the rags he set, the show had to gross as well as net.

Up came the corn with heavy tread; "no, no, Jackson," to him I said. Under his slouched hat left and right he lanced; the old script was a sight. "Halt!" — my worn down shanks stood fast. "Fire!" — and blazed his stifling blast. It shivered the story, no more fresh; it rent my banner and pierced his flesh.

Quick, as it fell, from the broken stuff, I hurriedly snatched what seemed enough to keep some originality still, and spoke right forth with all my will. "Shoot, if you must, this old gray script, but spare me one idea unclipped." A shade of sadness, a blush of shame, o'er the face of the producer came; the nobler nature within him stirred to life at one man's pleading word.

"Who touches a line of that script is dead, or I'm a dog — shoot on," he said. All day long through the Klieg light's heat, sounded the dread front office feet: all day long that idea tossed, kicked 'til it seemed it would get lost. Ever its torn sides rose and fell as the loyal hounds ripped it pell mell; and through the hill gaps' sunset light, one could see it would not last the night.

Now that the patchwork thing is o'er, and the cabal rides on its raids no more,

honor to thought! and let a tear fall for its own sake on an ideas' bier. Over producers, wretched slaves, chained to clichés, better in graves; peace and order and beauty draw round thy symbol of

light and law; forever the ghosts of ideas look down on producers below, in Hollywood town.

ALLEN BORETZ is a writer and producer, and a member of the SWG.

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REPORT AND COMMENT

CAN WRITERS BE GOOD TRADE UNIONISTS?

Guy Morgan

The affairs of the British Screenwriters Association have been monopolized during the past quarter by the question of our relationship with the Association of Cine Technicians.

The problem of whether to join forces with the numerical bulk of the film industry as a sub-section of their Trades Union, or whether to remain a separate body, together with the wider issues of a writer's place in a socialized state, have been widely canvassed between members, by pamphlet, private argument and debate.

It was generally agreed that with many members of the S.W.A. also belonging to the A.C.T. (including at least two A.C.T. founder-members), there was no conflict of aims between the two organizations; the point that split screen writers into two camps was whether screen writers would carry more weight in the industry as a unit inside the larger body or as an independent organization.

Partisans of the merger stressed the value of the machinery, resources, premises, and staff, that would become available, and indignantly denied the analogy of python and rabbit. They taunted screen writers with an inferiority complex in

regard to absorption, the suggestion that the S.W.A. would become submerged within the A.C.T. seemed to them "one of incredible humility." So far from being submerged, screen writers would vastly extend their influence and would wield real power from within.

Writers would be involved in strikes, anyway, but as members of the union could count on the backing of the industry themselves. Who could fight a threat of restrictive censorship more effectively, the S.W.A. or the A.C.T.?

Any body concerning itself with the improvement of conditions and terms of work, it seemed to them, was a trades union, and writers were just as much members of a craft as painters and plasterers. The choice lay between solidarity and isolationism — "the course of pessimists and cowards."

Supporters of independent existence scented political implications behind the rallying cry of solidarity and queried whether writers' interests would be properly represented as a minority section of a union consisting largely of cameramen, sound engineers, and laboratory workers; it was as wrong as for a dramatist to belong to the scene shifters' union. The *raison d'être* of the S.W.A., in their opinion, was the belief that the screen writer was something more than a technician.

Moreover, a trades union's preoccupation with hours, wages, and the right to strike did not apply to writers. How could you fix wages without a check on time,

GUY MORGAN is the newly elected Hon. Secretary of the British Screen Writers' Association.

and how about the writer who felt the urge to write in the lunch interval? A writer's part in film production was usually bought and completed before shooting began.

No writer, it was argued, could be a good trades unionist because a good trades unionist must toe the party line; writers should be free to write as they wished without implication in politics.

Co-operation without absorption carried the day. The vote was 52 against 22 for remaining independent.

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At the annual election of new officers, the following Executive Committee was elected: Eric Ambler, Bridget Boland, Roger Burford, T.E.B. Clarke, Jack Davies, Marjorie Deans, Robert Hall, Robert Lantz, Basil Mason, Guy Morgan, T. J. Morrison, Michael Pertwee, Gordon Wellesley, Jack Whittingham; and as representatives of the Associate Membership, Doris Davison, Eileen Griffiths, Stanley Irving.

Following the resignation of J. B. Priestley, Frank Launder was elected President of the Association.

At the first meeting of the new Executive Committee, Guy Morgan was appointed Hon. Secretary, Roger Burford Hon. Treasurer, and Jack Davies Press Relations Officer.

★ ★ ★

L O N D O N L E T T E R

Roger Bray

I very strongly feel that we in England should wholeheartedly endorse the Hollywood S.W.G.'s action in going all out for the **American Authors' Authority**. Oh, boy, that 343-7 majority in favour is a heartening sign, and I say that, without peradventure of doubt, whatever the difficulties might be, whatever set-backs we must endure, such a crusade is BOUND TO WIN IN THE END IF WE STICK TO OUR GUNS AND KEEP ON FIGHTING.

ROGER BRAY is a British screen writer and a very active member of the Screenwriters' Association.

I see no reason at all why the screen writers of the entire world, banding together as screen writers, should not force into being NOW, the principles of the A.A.A. as put forward by James M. Cain, applying them to all original stuff — **and if an author sells** (or becomes an affiliate of our craft by reason of selling his work for film production) **or works on his work for any producer**, then he must, ipso facto, become a member of the **Screen Writers' Guild Authors' Authority**.

I would like you to put this idea forward, that quite apart from the **A. A. Authority** — the ultima thule as it were, that we organize the screen writers into such a body. I am very sure that screen writers as a whole have suffered more set-backs and jiggery-pokery, both before sale, and after sale of original work, than any other group.

The screen writers' body in Britain is a very small one at present, but there is no reason why its collective voice should not be added to the Hollywood S W G vote on the A. A. Authority question.

I contend that our craft is a new medium, an expanding art, which combines authorship plus! And that PLUS is something which the ordinary author knows little about and, in 9 instances in 10, fails to acquire. If that be true, and I think it is true, why not A.S.W.G. **AUTHORS' AUTHORITY?** It may help the Authors as a body to see the light!

Personally, I have twice in two years' time taken a stand here against high-handed methods. In the first instance, I refused to sign a contract which contained the clause that "in the event of any credit being omitted from the screen for any reason whatsoever, **it would not be subject to legal action because the sole consideration and object of the contract was the financial benefit derived from this contract and the sale of the writer's services.**" I took the matter up with the Screen Writers' Association, and won. **The Producer backed down**, and agreed such a clause would in future be omitted from writers' contracts. But until my protest, every writer in that outfit, one of

the biggest in the country, had signed with that clause intact!

In the 2nd case, I refused to cede the book and circulation rights in my original story, **The Diggers' Republic**, along with the film rights, and finally won. Rank purchased the original **without** the book rights, circulation rights or serialization rights.

There are still many abuses being practiced here, of course, as elsewhere. And only last week a writer was denied a copy of the work he had written for a big production outfit — an adaptation of a famous novel. And so it goes!

It is very heartening in all this to know that the American companies here are looked upon as the fairest and best, and most writers have their eyes on American outfits whose bosses usually are far more practical and experienced, and far more open to suggestion and reasonable negotiation. Lethargy — just plain mental laziness and a slackness widespread in our times though it is — is the chief obstacle to progress.

I shall do my part here in gingering the boys up. Frank Launder, the original founder and first Honorary Secretary of the British Screenwriters' Association,

was, on my motion, raised to the great honour of President, the first purely screenwriter president we have had, displacing the great Priestley who was just as contentious as a Screenwriters' President as he is in most things. This has let in Guy Morgan, a newspaper man, as Honorary Secretary, a fellow who will, I feel certain, try hard.

I shall keep you informed, and will send you a considered article next month.

Went to see the Command Performance last night — a crowded, hectic affair, indeed, with a top-drawer assortment of stars from your side — and many other notables, too. The film, *A Matter of Life and Death*, was a grand idea in its opening stages, and very beautifully staged and produced — the colour work was fine! — but spoiled by an extraneously dragged in argument, pro and con, anent Britain and the U.S.A., which seemed rather cheap and ill-timed, and altogether out of tune with the high-level conception which was original to begin with.

With the best wishes to the S.W.G. in its fight for the A.A.A., and trust that we shall be able to aid you all by adding our voice to yours very soon on a test vote.

★ ★ ★

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

The following letter has been received from Guy Morgan, new Hon. Secretary of the British Screenwriters' Association:

This is to say "hello" on behalf of the new Executive Committee of the British Screenwriters' Association, and to introduce myself to you as Hon. Secretary.

With the correspondence files I have also inherited a sense of guilt that your file here contains more friendly approaches than our file there. The new Executive Committee would like to rectify this.

Our affairs during the past six months have been monopolised with negotia-

tions, and debate whether or not to join the Association of Cine Technicians, the Trades Union of our industry. Having finally voted to maintain our separate existence we would now like to renew and cement our relations with you.

We envy you the membership and paper supply that makes possible so lively and forthright an organ as "The Screenwriter," and look forward to the day when we too can go into print under our own production. Meanwhile I note with shame that both France and Czechoslovakia provide more news of their activities in your

columns than the British Film Industry. It is up to us to remedy this.

I enclose a few notes about our current activities, and will undertake to keep you regularly informed in future. Will you please let me know your copy dates, anything particular you would like from us, and whether you prefer notes, or articles. Notes I can guarantee, but Screenwriters are notoriously lazy about articles.

Would you, for instance, be interested in a quarterly list of British full-length feature writing-credits? Our list, I am afraid, would only comprise a dozen or so films at present production rates, but frequently involves U. S. Companies and writers.

We are closely following your campaign for the American Authors' Author-

ity, and have already reprinted James Cain's article for circularization to all our members.

Among our long term aims is a campaign to secure the payment of Screenwriters by royalties, a goal that we flatter ourselves we have rosier hopes of attaining here by reason of the smaller size of our industry, and the lead already given by writers like Priestley and Shaw.

Our recommendations to the Board of Trade on the renewal of the Films Act will, I imagine, interest you. They are still however under discussion.

I hope you will overlook the lack of response to your letter of January 23rd 1946, and agree to postdate to the present the "beginning of long and fruitful co-operation" that you so cordially invited.

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N E W S N O T E S

★ Current programs in the N. Y. Museum of Modern Art's History of the Motion Picture are: *Travel & Anthropology* (III): Moana, Jan. 3-5; *The German Influence: Hands, Sunrise*, Jan. 6-9; *American Film Comedy* (XI): *Big Business, The General*, Jan. 10-12; *Mystery and Violence* (II): *Tatters, Underworld*, Jan. 13-16; *Travel and Anthropology* (IV): *Chang*, Jan. 17-19; *Screen Personalities* (I): *Garbo*, Jan. 20-23; *The Swedish-American Film: Hotel Imperial, The Wind*, Jan. 24-26; *Coming of Sound* (I): *The Jazz Singer*, Fox Movietone, *Steamboat Willie*, *All Quiet on Western Front*, Jan. 27-30; *Coming of Sound* (II): *Hallelujah*, Jan. 31, Feb. 1-2.

★ SWG member Stanley Richards' one-act play against racial intolerance, *District of Columbia*, was produced recently by the Freedom Club at the Malin studios

in New York. The play was included in Dodd, Mead & Co.'s *The Ten Best One Act Plays of 1944*.

★ *Father Was President*, a play by SWG members Malvin Wald and Walter Doniger, has won an award for the fifth time in a national playwrighting contest. Latest award is from the Play Club of N. Y.

★ *Where There's Smoke*, a new Main Line Mystery by SWG member Stewart Sterling, was published Nov. 27th by J. B. Lippincott Co.

★ Ex-SWG member Len Zinberg's new novel, *What D'ya Know For Sure*, is on the Doubleday January list.

★ *In This Very Room*, a play by SWG member Harold Goldman, will be produced

in N. Y. in February by George Somnes and Helen Bonfils.

★ The Left-Handed Dictionary, a new feature column by SWG member Leonard Louis Levinson and Ted Taylor of the Hollywood Sun made its debut in Cosmopolitan magazine in December.

★ Hollywood: The Movie Colony, The Movie Makers, by SWG member Leo Rosten, is being translated for publication in France and Czechoslovakia. His Sleep, My Love and The Education of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N are also being translated for publication in several European countries.

★ Laura, the hit play by Vera Caspary

and George Sklar and based on Miss Caspary's celebrated novel, was a big box office attraction at the Pasadena Playhouse in December.

★ A documentary, How a Bill Goes Through Congress, written by Phil Eastman and directed by John Hubley, is being produced for the State Dept. at United Productions.

★ SWG President Emmet Lavery will represent the Guild at the Photoplay magazine Gold Medal Award dinner Jan. 13 when awards will be made to writers, directors and producers of outstanding 1946 pictures selected on basis of Gallup poll surveys.

★ ★ ★

A LISTING OF SCREEN WRITERS' CREDITS
EARNED ON FEATURE PRODUCTIONS
OF CURRENT AND RECENT RELEASE

CREDITS

OCTOBER 16, 1946 TO DECEMBER 1, 1946

A

STEPHEN MOREHOUSE AVERY

Sole Screenplay THE WOMAN IN WHITE, WB
Joint Screenplay (with Salka Viertel) DEEP VALLEY, WB

B

DOROTHY BENNETT

Sole Screenplay THE BRASHER DUBLOON, Fox

HERBERT BIBERMAN

Joint Original Story (with Elliot Paul) NEW ORLEANS, (Majestic) UA

EDWARD BOCK

Joint Screenplay (with Raymond L. Schrock) THE HUNTER IS A FUGITIVE, Col

C

JERRY CADY

Sole Adaptation FOREVER AMBER, Fox

RAYMOND CHANDLER

Novel Basis THE BRASHER DUBLOON, Fox

D

VALENTINE DAVIES

Joint Screenplay (with George Seaton) CHICKEN EVERY SUNDAY, Fox

PHILIP DUNNE

Joint Screenplay (with Ring Lardner, Jr.)
FOREVER AMBER, Fox

E**JULIUS J. EPSTEIN**

Joint Play Basis (with Philip G. Epstein)
CHICKEN EVERY SUNDAY, Fox

PHILIP G. EPSTEIN

Joint Play Basis (with Julius J. Epstein)
CHICKEN EVERY SUNDAY, Fox

HARRY J. ESSEX

Sole Original Screenplay BOSTON BLACKIE
AND THE LAW, Col

G**GERALD GERAGHTY**

Joint Screenplay (with Lawrence Hazard)
WYOMING, Rep

H**LAWRENCE HAZARD**

Joint Screenplay (with Gerald Geraghty)
WYOMING, Rep

NORMAN HOUSTON

Sole Screenplay THUNDER MOUNTAIN, RKO

EDWARD HUEBSCH

Sole Screenplay MILLIE'S DAUGHTER, Col

DICK IRVING HYLAND

Joint Screenplay (with Elliot Paul) NEW
ORLEANS, (Majestic) UA

K**LAURA KERR**

Joint Screenplay (with Allen Rivkin) THE
FARMER'S DAUGHTER, RKO

L**RING LARDNER, JR.**

Joint Screenplay (with Philip Dunne) FOR-
EVER AMBER, Fox

M**ELIZABETH MEEHAN**

Joint Screenplay (with Richard Sale)
RUSSIAN RIVER, Rep

PETER MILNE

Sole Screenplay MY WILD IRISH ROSE, WB

P**ELLIOT PAUL**

Joint Screenplay (with Dick Irving Hyand)
and Joint Original Story (with Herbert Bi-
berman) NEW ORLEANS (Majestic) UA

LEONARD PRASKINS

Sole Adaptation THE BRASHER DUBLOON,
Fox

S**RICHARD SALE**

Joint Screenplay (with Elizabeth Meehan)
RUSSIAN RIVER, Rep

RAYMOND SCHROCK

Joint Screenplay (with Edward Bock) THE
HUNTER IS A FUGITIVE, Col

KATHRYN SCOLA

Sole Screenplay NIGHT UNTO NIGHT, WB

GEORGE SEATON

Joint Screenplay (with Valentine Davies)
CHICKEN EVERY SUNDAY, Fox

EARLE SNELL

Sole Original Screenplay MARSHALL OF
CRIPPLE CREEK, Rep

T**TED THOMAS**

Sole Story KING OF THE WILD HORSES, Col

DAN TOTHERO

Novel Basis DEEP VALLEY, WB

MARION TURK

Additional Dialogue I WONDER WHO'S
KISSING HER NOW, Fox

V**SALKA VIERTEL**

Joint Screenplay (with Stephen Morehouse
Avery) DEEP VALLEY, WB

W**BRENDA WEISBERG**

Sole Screenplay KING OF THE WILD
HORSES, Col

ANNE WIGTON

Joint Adaptation (with Rip Van Ronkel)
ABIE'S IRISH ROSE, (Bing Crosby) UA

NEXT MONTH AND THEREAFTER

JEAN BRY	•	FRENCH MOTION PICTURE SCHOOL
MILT GROSS	•	THE FUNCTION OF FUNCTIONALISM
DALTON TRUMBO	•	THE CRAFT OF THE SCREEN WRITER
HERBERT MARGOLIS	•	UNESCO AND THE WRITER

And further articles by LOUIS ADAMIC, HUGO BUTLER, SAMUEL FULLER, SHERIDAN GIBNEY, ROBERT HARARI, JAY RICHARD KENNEDY, ARTHUR KOBER, VLADIMIR POZNER, ROBERT ROSSEN, HAROLD J. SALEMSON, ARTHUR STRAWN, and others.

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N O M A G I C W A N D

WILLIAM WYLER

THE director in Hollywood is a man who is continually on a spot. He gets on the set at nine in the morning, really quite early for serious thinking, and looks around at a hundred or more people who are all staring at him, waiting for him to give "the word." Sometimes he hasn't got it. Sometimes he feels like the European director of some years back who, unable to make a decision about the scene he was shooting, pounded his head on the floor of the stage and cried, "Will it ever come to me?!"

I know, because this sort of thing happens to me all the time. Eventually, "it" comes to you, and you're off the spot until the next problem, which comes along in the form of a property man who wants an okay on a pocket comb (to be used next week), or a producer who thinks there is a conspiracy to bankrupt him by making too many takes.

WILLIAM WYLER is the distinguished motion picture director. No Magic Wand was written as a chapter for a forthcoming book edited by William Hawks, to be called Their Magic Wands. It includes chapters by various leading directors on their methods of working. Mr. Wyler was asked to illustrate his own approach to direction by discussing The Best Years of Our Lives.

This process of getting along with people, making decisions, thinking up things for people to do, and saying "yes" or "no" is a recognized and socially acceptable form of making a living, and in some quarters even considered "art."

A great deal of serious writing has been done about it, too. You'd think it would be of some help to you in solving your problems; however most of this writing pertains to D. W. Griffith, the silent film, the German film, the documentary film, the Soviet film, Charlie Chaplin's *Shoulder Arms* or the "transition" to sound, with occasional references to Rene Clair and the tradition of French comedy.

As yet, as far as I know, there is no recognizable aesthetic for our contemporary fiction film, the kind people are going to see nowadays. The people who make pictures, and face problems, have to solve them on their own hook, without any connection or communication with other minds on the creative level. I should like to point out that the field is open for a great deal of serious work. However, I am not the man to attempt it. I feel ill-equipped to undertake any more than a kind of personal testament which may throw light on how one man approaches these problems from day to day, getting on and off spots as gracefully (?) as he can.



It may be of some interest as "source material" for me to recount briefly the steps by which one film was made in the year 1946, with reference to some of the problems faced along the way. Because the events connected with filming *The Best Years of Our Lives* are still fresh in my mind, and because in many ways, that picture is most representative of my own particular way of directing, I'd like to discuss how we made it.

The emphasis on the personal is deliberate, for I feel that in films, as in any other art form, no general rules which must be followed can apply. Each man or woman making films must evolve his own personal style; I do not believe great films can be made on a factory-conveyor belt basis, untouched by human hands, as it were. I have always tried to direct my own pictures out of my own feelings, and out of my own approach to life. I have tried to make them "by hand," and it has been

hard work, work which has left me drained of energy for months after the completion of each film.

In the case of *The Best Years*, I should like to make the point that the picture came out of its period, and was the result of the social forces at work when the war ended. In a sense the picture was written by events and imposed a responsibility upon us to be true to these events and refrain from distorting them for our own ends.

In 1945, when it became apparent that the war would end soon, and for the first time in years, we would think about getting men out of uniform instead of into it, serious work on the problem was being done by the American Veterans Committee, a new Veterans organization of World War II. They enunciated the principle that the veteran could not be isolated from the main body of the nation, for his problems were also national problems. The slogan "Citizens first, veterans second" expressed this well, and the head of the American Veterans Committee expressed the belief that if the veteran came home to a working family relationship, and to a job, and a place to live, there would be no veterans' "problem."

While these concepts were being enunciated, MacKinlay Kantor, well-known novelist, had been engaged by the studio to prepare an original screen treatment on the veterans. Because Mr. Kantor had been overseas as a correspondent, and had flown missions with the 8th Air Force, he knew both sides of the coin — civilian and veteran — and felt the importance of presenting the story fairly. The result of his work was a novel in blank verse, *Glory for Me*.

This book, in manuscript form, was presented to me as one of several properties owned by the studio, to which I was committed for one more film under a pre-war contract. I knew of no subject which was as important to me, for I was just about to become a civilian myself.

Glory for Me was a story of three men who came back to their home town, which Kantor chose to call Boone City. One man, Captain Fred Derry, an 8th Air Force Bombardier, had been a soda jerk in civilian life, and had lived on the wrong side of the tracks, with his weak, drink-destroyed father and crude, insensitive step-mother. He had married a girl while training in Texas, and had only a few days of marriage before being shipped overseas. His first night home, he finds her making love to

another man (ironically an ex-Marine), and gives her enough money to get a divorce.

Al Stephenson, the second veteran, had been an infantry sergeant. His first night home, memories of combat come back to contrast with the soft and easy life he will lead with his wife, grown daughter and adolescent son. He has a sense of guilt in accepting the luxuries of a home and family, when he thinks of his friends who are not coming back. Stephenson had been a banker before the war, and has no problem in making a living. His problem becomes that of working in a bank and reconciling the sharp business practice he sees with the social conscience he developed during the war.

The third veteran, Homer, Machinists Mate second class, a nineteen year old kid, had become a spastic through combat injuries. Unable to coordinate his movements, awkward, even grotesque, he finds home-coming sheer misery because his people don't understand him. His situation is aggravated by his love for the girl next door, his high school sweetheart, Wilma, and his fear that she will go through with marriage only through pity for him. Through drink, Homer finds he can coordinate his jerky movements a little better, and is on the verge of becoming an alcoholic.

The problems established, Kantor proceeds to solve them by having Fred fall in love with Peggy Stephenson, almost rob her father's bank when he finds himself unable to get a job, eventually go into partnership with the man who owned the drug store in which he used to work before the war.

Al Stephenson makes a GI loan to an ex-SeaBee named Novak, which brings down the wrath of the bank president about his ears. His fight with the bank cannot be resolved since Al sees men in terms of human beings, rather than in terms of dollars and cents. Al resigns from the bank, and goes into partnership with Novak to "grow things."

Homer drinks more heavily, fights with his parents, tries to shoot himself, but bungles that because of his spasticity. Eventually the strength of Wilma's love becomes apparent to him, and their story ends on a note of hope, with Wilma studying medical texts in an effort to understand and help him.

I have gone into the details of MacKinlay Kantor's plot for *Glory*

for Me because they must be understood in any technical discussion of how we made *The Best Years of Our Lives*. Besides, the story is always the central problem in any film I have directed. A director can take a poorly written script, and perhaps he can present it a bit better than the writing indicated. But he cannot take a bad story and make a good story out of it by some magical process of direction. I hold a brief for the screen writer, who has only too often been under-estimated in his contribution to motion pictures. But it is just as true that a good script is no guarantee of a good picture, as many writers have discovered to their sorrow.

Mack Kantor's book provided the basis for most of what we subsequently put on film. Some things, however, had to be changed, and the story re-told in screen terms. For example, the book was written in 1945, and we were making a picture for release in 1947, which meant we had to make certain changes to keep the picture from being a period piece. The alterations we made are in no way a reflection on Mack Kantor, whose original creative impulse got us started.

Robert E. Sherwood agreed to write the screenplay, and he began work in November 1945.

As almost everyone knows Sherwood won the Pulitzer Prize for drama three times, had a fine war record as an infantry soldier in the first World War, was the brilliant head of the Office of War Information's Overseas Division, and friend and aide to Franklin Delano Roosevelt during all of World War II. I got out of the Army in November 1945, and had some preliminary discussions with Bob in New York. However it was not until December, when he came to Hollywood that we really began our intensive work on the screenplay.

I had as my assistant on the production of the picture Lester Koenig, a talented young writer who had written and helped me make both *Memphis Belle* and *Thunderbolt* for the Army Air Forces. Les was also keenly aware of the central problem as a result of his experience as a GI and in his own readjustment to civilian life, which added considerably to the value of his contribution to the picture during the four months of our intimate working relations with Sherwood.

The first, and major deviation from the book was in the character of Homer, the spastic sailor. The deviation came about in this way: I

had seen a training film made by the Army Pictorial Service, called *Diary of a Sergeant*. In very simple, moving terms, it told the true story of Harold Russell, a sergeant in the paratroopers who lost both hands when a dynamite charge exploded prematurely during maneuvers in North Carolina. The picture showed how Russell was outfitted with new devices which enabled him to do most of the things anybody else does. How he rose above physical limitations, seemed to be a great object lesson. He had a wonderful face which expressed strength, courage and great faith in the future.

Bob Sherwood was keen on the idea of changing the character of Homer, and did his rewriting only after meeting Harold Russell, and getting a really intensive understanding of the boy and his problems. Incidentally, it may be of interest to note that we wanted Russell himself to play the part, rather than an actor. No matter how good a performance an actor gave of a man without hands, an audience could reassure itself by saying, "It's only a movie." With Russell playing Homer, no such reassurance was possible.

The second major deviation from the original novel came in the story of Fred Derry and his wife, Marie. Instead of having him discover her infidelity the first night, Sherwood decided to avoid a meeting between them, and allow a love story to start between Fred and Al Stephenson's daughter, Peggy. Marie would be kept alive throughout the story, not merely as the third side of the conventional triangle, but as a symbol of a way of life diametrically opposed to the way of life represented by Peggy.

In a sense, the love story is an allegory, although an implied one — for first of all, characters have to be real human beings who exist independently of an author's symbolic use of them. Marie, the wife, stands for the kind of a fellow Fred Derry was, prior to his going into the Air Forces. Ignorant, insular, and selfish, such people have no insight or concern for the problems of the nation, or of the world. They are concerned only with their own problems, which are summed up in the simple quest for "a good time." These were the people who patronized black markets during the war, never gave blood to the Red Cross, bought no War Bonds, and did no war work. Yet they considered themselves "100% Americans." On the other hand, Peggy, Al Stephenson's daugh-

ter, is knowing, aware of the larger world about her, interested in problems beyond her own. She knew what the war was about, and participated in it by becoming a nurse's aide in a local hospital. It is she who understands that the conflict in *Fred Derry* is the conflict between an old way of life in America, and a newer, healthier way of life born out of the experience and sacrifice of the people who fought the war.

It may appear that I am digressing from my theme — which is “direction,” to discuss something which appears to be in the writer's province; however it cannot be stressed too often that the director's job should not begin only after the script has been written. There is no definite dividing line where writing ends and directing starts. They must overlap.

In resolving the stories of the characters, Bob Sherwood faced some problems which we discussed together. We had to be honest in ending the three stories, for we felt the picture would be seen by millions of veterans. We could not indicate any solution to a problem which would work only for a character in a movie. Sherwood felt, for example, that it wasn't a fair solution to let Al Stephenson quit his job at the bank and go into something else where he could avoid “problems,” because millions of other veterans would have no such easy alternative to a job they did not like. Most men would have to stick with the job and try to change it for the better. So we left Stephenson still working at the bank, having thrown down the gauntlet to the bank president, and announced his intention of fighting for a more liberal loan policy toward veterans.

Homer's story demanded a particular resolution in terms of a man who had no hands. We wanted to have a scene in which Homer tells Wilma the reason he has been avoiding her is not that he doesn't love her, but that he doesn't feel it fair to her to marry her. “You don't know, Wilma,” he says, “You don't know what it would be like to live with me, to have to face this every day — every night.” Wilma replies, “I can only find out by trying, and if it turns out that I haven't courage enough, we'll soon know it.” This was intended to lead to a scene in Homer's bedroom in which, in order to prove his point, he demonstrates his difficulty in undressing, removes his hooks, and explains how helpless he is once they are off.

This scene affords a good example of how writer and director can

function together, for I had to decide whether or not I could do such a scene on the screen. There were delicate problems in bringing a boy and girl to a bedroom at night, with the boy getting into his pyjama top, revealing his leather harness which enabled him to work his hooks, and finally, taking the harness off.

After discussions with Bob, we solved the problems, and felt we could play the scene without the slightest suggestion of indelicacy, and without presenting Homer's hooks in a shocking or horrifying manner. As a matter of fact, we felt we could do quite the opposite, and make it a moving and tender love scene. Wilma meets the test squarely, makes Homer see that she doesn't mind the hooks, and what she feels for him is not pity, but love.



The Fred Derry story also required a new ending. After establishing so strongly that Fred couldn't get a good job because he had no training for anything except the trade of a bombardier, Sherwood didn't feel it was fair to have him fall into a soft job, almost by accident. Instead we wanted to say to millions of men like Fred Derry, that if they were being realistic, they could expect no special favors because they were veterans, and they would not get good jobs unless they were qualified to hold them. Therefore it was up to Fred to pick a trade or profession, and learn it, as thoroughly as he learned the trade of a bombardier.

When Fred Derry decides to leave town in defeat, unable to get a job, no longer married to Marie, and at odds with Peggy, whom he loves, he goes to the airport to hitch a ride on an army plane. While he waits, he wanders around among endless rows of junked combat fighters and bombers. In long moving shots, made on location at the Army scrap-heap for obsolete planes at Ontario, California, we followed Fred Derry as he moved thru the gigantic graveyard. At once the parallel was apparent: for four years Fred was trained, disciplined, and formed into a precise human instrument for destruction. Now his work is done, and he too has been thrown to the junk pile.

At this point, we wanted to have Fred Derry re-live one of his war experiences, and as a consequence have him realize that in order to win his personal battles as a civilian, it was necessary to apply the same

courage and strength of character that he and twelve million others applied to win the war.

This was the climax of Fred's story; unlike most movie stories, it had to be resolved in terms of a basic change in attitude, which is always difficult to handle in such an objective medium. "You'll have to do something cinematic here," Bob told me. "I know just what we want to say, but it isn't to be said in words — it must be said with the camera, and that's your business." He was right. In such instances the author has a right to expect the director to do some "directing."

After we had Fred Derry crawl into an abandoned B-17, the problem was to make clear what was going through his mind. There were several ways.

Finally we hit on what I feel is a good dramatization of the whole situation, and yet very simple and direct. We did nothing in the interior of the B-17 except show Fred Derry seated and staring out through the dusty plexiglass. Then we went to a long exterior shot of the plane, in which we could see the engine nacelles, stripped of engines and propellers. We panned from nacelle to nacelle, as though there really were engines in them, and the engines were starting up for take-off. Then we made another long shot, on a dolly, and also head on. We started moving our dolly in toward the nose of the B-17, through which we could see Fred Derry seated at the bombardier's post. This shot moved in, from a low angle, and as it moved in, it created the illusion of the plane coming toward the camera, as if for a take-off. To these shots we planned to add sound effects of engines starting, and then let the musical score suggest flight. We then cut inside to a shot of Fred's back, and as we moved in, we saw his hand reach for the bomb release. We continued moving until we reached an effective close-up of Fred, framed against the plexiglass nose of the bomber.

What made this scene give the audience the feeling that Fred was re-living a specific combat experience was a scene immediately preceding which was designed for the purpose. This was a scene in Fred Derry's home, in which his father was reading aloud from a citation for the Distinguished Flying Cross. The citation gave us not only a capsule form of exposition, but allowed us to make a sharp and ironic comment on

Fred's reward for his war record being discouragement and hopelessness, and defeat as a civilian.

The reading of the citation tells the audience the story of Fred's determination and courage, and the audience remembers it subsequently while Fred sits in the nose of the wrecked B-17.

As a result of re-living this experience, Fred decides to take a job as a laborer, which isn't well paid, but which may lead to a future in the building business. And so his story is resolved, not by letting him have a good job, but by a change in his attitude to a realistic appraisal of himself in relation to the time in which he lives.

It is readily apparent that this is not a story of plot, but a picture of some people, who were real people, facing real problems. It was important for all of the people connected with the making of the picture to understand this. Consequently, I had many long talks with Gregg Toland about the photography weeks before we started shooting. Gregg had to make certain basic decisions about how he could best transfer our scenes to the screen, and finally we decided to try for as much simple realism as possible. We had a clear cut understanding that we would avoid glamour closeups, and soft, diffused backgrounds. No men in the cast would wear make up, and the make up on the women would be kept to a minimum so that we could really see our people, and feel their skin textures.

Since Gregg intended to carry his focus to the extreme background of each set, detail in set designing, construction, and dressing became very important. But carrying focus is not merely a stunt; it is to me a terribly useful technique. In *The Best Years of Our Lives*, the sharp and crisp photography, filled with good contrast and texture, is one of the key factors in establishing a mood of realism. Gregg Toland's remarkable facility for handling background and foreground action has enabled me over a period of six pictures he has photographed to develop a better technique of staging my scenes. For example, I can have action and reaction in the same shot, without having to cut back and forth from individual cuts of the characters. This makes for smooth continuity, an almost effortless flow of the scene, for much more interesting composition in each shot, and lets the spectator look from one to the other character at his own will, do his own cutting.

In playing each scene, I have tried to work it out in such a way that generally I shoot into sets the long way, which means I can get the fullest use of each set. I suppose I have certain habits, like most directors who have been at it for any length of time, and without really being conscious of doing so, arrange the scene so that the characters are close together, and can all be included in shots which are close enough so that the expressions on their faces can be clearly seen. But this kind of elementary technical approach to the staging of a scene does not intrigue me. I have never been as interested in the externals of presenting a scene as I have been in the inner workings of the people the scene is about. I am not minimizing the importance of correct use of the camera, or staging of the action. I mean that they are important only as they help the audience understand what the characters are thinking, feeling, saying or doing. For me, the most trying, and yet the most rewarding work on the set is with the cast.

I have no consciously formulated theories of acting; I cannot teach anyone how to act. However, what I try to do is help the actor or actress understand clearly what the scene is about. I believe if the actor or actress really understands the scene, and understands the inner motivations of the character, that half the battle for a good performance is won.

I have found most actors extremely cooperative, and lacking in the kind of "temperament" that makes for trouble on the set. In the past, I have had a reputation of being tough on actors, and on occasion there have been violent arguments, and unpleasant situations. In most cases I have insisted on doing the scene my way. I have not wanted to be arbitrary, but I feel that the director is held responsible for what gets on the screen, and therefore he must have final say on the set. In filming *The Best Years of Our Lives*, I had the most pleasant associations with its stars Myrna Loy, Fredric March, Dana Andrews and Teresa Wright. In general my method of working was to set one day aside for rehearsal before going into a major sequence. We would spend the morning sitting around a table, reading the script, much as it is done in early stages of a theater rehearsal. After reading and discussing the scenes until we felt we understood them, I would stage each scene, usually letting the actors work in the way which seemed most comfortable to them. In this way we could tell how the scenes played, the actors would have a chance

to study them in the way we intended doing them, and Gregg Toland would have a chance to observe what would be required of him in the photography.

On the set, before shooting, I rehearse the scene as a whole, and each time we go through it, I try to make suggestions for improving it. I very rarely give actual "readings" of lines, but rather try to show the actor where he was missing some shade of meaning the writer had intended. Sometimes the actor shows me where my concept could be improved. I try not to hurry, or give the cast a feeling that I am impatient with them. This is not merely diplomacy. It is a recognition that it is not easy to play a scene well, and that a director cannot hope to go through a brief rehearsal, shoot a take, and let it go at that. I try to be patient because I recognize that film-making is a long, slow, detailed process, which requires patience. I have been called a perfectionist, but that hasn't usually been intended as a compliment. I do make a great many takes, when necessary, but there is always a reason. I consider it a loss when something which might have been in the scene doesn't come across. To anyone who looks at the scene, it appears to be fine. But I know how much better it could have been, had we worked just a little harder to make a point. And I have long ago decided that whatever extra trouble was necessary to make a scene right, or better, was worth it. Often, toward the end of a day, when people wanted to get home to their wives and children, I could sense a resentment toward me on the set. I knew I was not making myself popular by working until seven or seven-thirty. I knew that a lot of dinner plans (including my own) were being upset. But I also knew that if I kept working on the scene it would be a better scene.

The people might hate me on the set, but when they went to see the picture in a theater, if it was a good picture, I knew they would be proud to have worked on it, and perhaps they might forgive me for being difficult. But I also knew that no matter how nice I was on the set, if the picture laid an egg in the theater, nobody who worked on it, and no critic who reviewed it would say, "The picture stinks, but Wyler is a nice fellow to work with." If I have to choose between personal popularity, or the popularity of my pictures, I have to choose the picture every time.

During the shooting, which began April 15th and ended August 9th, 1946, I worked very closely with Daniel Mandell, one of the really fine film editors. Danny has put most of my pictures together, and knows as much about the subject as anybody you could name. Our company met at 8:30 every morning to see the film we'd shot the day before. Danny sat next to me, and I would pick the takes to be used, and briefly discuss the way I intended the scene to be cut. Then, during the course of the day, Danny would come on the set and we would talk over specific problems. Occasionally, every few weeks, I would devote an evening to running the assembled film with Danny, and making suggestions to him. By working this way I was able to avoid making mistakes on the set, for I had a feeling of the picture as a whole. The day after we finished the long four month shooting schedule, Danny had a first rough cut ready to show. It ran just a few minutes under three hours, and very few changes had to be made in it.

It was after this amazingly fast job of editing was completed that I had several discussions with Hugo Friedhofer, the composer who was hired to write the music. I find that this consultation is very necessary, even with the best of musicians, because the director must make sure that the composer sees each scene as he sees it. Since the director shot the picture, he is best qualified to be the final authority on his own dramatic intent. While my decisions as to which scenes will have music is subject to change, I try to be quite certain the composer and I are in agreement as to the **meaning** the music should have in relation to each sequence.



At the start of this article, I referred to the lack of communication among people on the creative level in Hollywood. We are going to try to remedy that situation at Liberty Films where Frank Capra and George Stevens and I hope to benefit from an exchange of views. Each of us will be in absolute control of his own picture, but each of us will welcome the criticism and advice of the others, as well as of Sam Briskin, our executive producer.

There is another aspect of the Liberty Films set-up which seems important to me. All four of us have served in the armed forces, and we

have a staff of younger executives and writers who have seen overseas military service. All of us at Liberty Films have participated in the major experience of our time, and while I cannot prove it, I believe it will have a healthy effect on our work. I know that I most certainly could not have directed *The Best Years of Our Lives* as I did without the knowledge of the people and the background which came out of my own Army career. But aside from specific knowledge and experience of war and fighting men, I think that all of us have learned something and gained a more realistic view of the world. Frank Capra has told me that he feels this strongly, and I know George Stevens is not the same man for having seen the corpses of Dachau.

Hollywood seems a long way from the world at times. Yet it does not have to be. Unfortunately, at the moment, the motion picture in Hollywood is divorced from the main currents of our time. It does not reflect the world in which we live. It often has very little meaning for audiences at home, and even less for audiences abroad. It is time that we in Hollywood realized the world doesn't revolve about us.

In Europe, I believe great prospects for films are in sight. I have met some of the film-makers of France and England who approach their work with a simplicity and directness which eludes many of us in Hollywood. The European motion picture people have gone through the war in a very real sense, and I think they are closer to what is going on in the world than we are. The competition from Europe will force us to meet the challenge.



A GOLD MEDAL FOR DUDLEY NICHOLS

Dudley Nichols, who pioneered in the organization of the Screen Writers' Guild and served as first president of the SWG, received on January 13 the Photoplay Gold Medal as the writer of the screenplay of *The Bells of St. Mary's*, chosen by a Gallup poll as the most popular picture of 1946.

On January 16 Dr. George Gallup was guest of honor at a Screen Writers' Guild dinner given as the first of a series of SWG events dealing with the creative arts in motion pictures. A report of this event will be published in the next issue of *The Screen Writer*.

JOE LOVED EVERYBODY

SAMUEL FULLER

JOE was a rifleman in the infantry. Before that he had written for pictures, he had several books to his credit. Joe got hit a couple of times. He killed a lot of Krauts and never bitched because he knew it wouldn't do any good. He could never get out of the infantry. Only two ways to get out, Joe knew. One was in a mattress cover and the other was for lke to personally have him transferred.

The day Joe's outfit invaded Mons, Belgium, he received a cablegram from his agent in Beverly Hills.

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UNQUOTE THE LETTER X YOU WILL SUPPLANT
WITH THE NAME OF YOUR ATTORNEY IN FACT
SO APPOINTED TRUST YOU WELL AND ENJOYING
PARIS DEEPEST AFFECTION

JACKSON HITES

Joe got a sick, happy, strange feeling in the pit of his stomach. It raced all over his stinking body. He had written Sunny Side before the

SAMUEL FULLER is a member of SWG who saw much active service in the war and who is now back in Hollywood under contract to a major studio.

war. While on maneuvers in England for the invasion of Normandy, a publisher had accepted it. Joe loved Jackson Hites that very minute. He would have sold screen rights to the book for thirty cents. This was a hell of a time to get such news. Fifteen grand!

Joe couldn't send a cable. It was **verboden**. Joe was only a "god-dam" rifleman. Cablegrams were for officers.

After the Battle of Mons, Joe wrote to Jackson Hites.



It was in the Hurtgen Forest, Germany, when Joe received a fat contract from Jackson Hites. The Hurtgen was rough. Joe didn't have time to read six-point type in a forest sprinkled with airbursts. The Krauts were having a field day. 20 mm's were used as straight trajectories.

Near the town of Hamich, Joe got a chance to read the contract. It was a beautiful contract. It smelled like Beverly Hills. Clean, white, rich paper with pretty words. Joe read carefully. To make it official he had to get his commanding officer's signature on the contract.

Joe looked for his captain just about the time Hamich came under fire. The Krauts crowded the one little crooked street with Mark Sixes. Those long telephone poles, the 88's, poked their noses around buildings and blasted. A couple of Joe's friends won Silver Stars posthumously in the next five minutes.

Hamich fell. Medics were busy. Joe cornered his commanding officer and explained the situation. The captain wouldn't believe that Joe was paid fifteen thousand dollars for a story. Movies! You mean Hollywood? Christ! Lessee that contract. Christ, it's on the level. Where do I sign? You know I used to act in school, Joe . . .

Joe was quite a happy guy, until he remembered where he was. Fifteen grand! What if he filled a mattress cover tonight? Yes, Joe was gloomy. But now and then he would think and dream and grin. They say he was the first infantryman to sell a book to Hollywood while overseas. Well, first, second, tenth, it made no difference.

The doggies in his outfit felt sorry for him. What a hell of a way to

fight a war, knowing there was fifteen thousand waiting for you IF you got back.

Joe got back. He had a lot of points. Why not? They added up from North Africa through seven campaigns to Czechoslovakia.

Joe returned to Hollywood and was really grateful. He saw his agent, Jackson Hites, who congratulated him all over again, in person this time, for the sale of Sunny Side to pictures.

The man who bought Sunny Side was an important producer. Charlie Wills. Everybody knew Charlie Wills. He made some of the best pictures in Hollywood.

The agent brought Joe into Charlie Wills' office. Charlie wanted Joe to write the screenplay on his own novel. Joe did, and made several thousand dollars. Joe was a very happy guy. He loved everybody.

Then one day Joe learned that Charlie didn't own Sunny Side anymore. Charlie had sold it to Bill Wrinn for one hundred thousand dollars. \$100,000!

And Bill Wrinn said the screenplay was worth every penny of it. Of course it made Joe very happy, very proud.

Bill Wrinn was strictly a Class A producer. He made only important pictures. He really was one of the most brilliant guys in town, and Joe was tickled pink that it fell into Wrinn's lap.

Joe was grateful to his agent for selling the book. Joe was grateful to Charlie Wills for buying it and for giving him a crack at his own screenplay.

Joe was grateful to Bill Wrinn for putting him in the big time bracket. A hundred grand for a script. Sure Joe was grateful to Bill Wrinn.

Bill Wrinn was grateful to Joe, too. He tossed Joe a little extra jack — not much, but a bit more than he slipped to his favorite headwaiter at Christmas time. And that was all.

Because long as there was no AAA, there wasn't much writers could do about a producer purchasing a story and then unloading it on another producer for an enormous profit.

Because as long as there was no "leasing," what could a writer do? You don't have to sell your stories. Nobody's begging on hands and knees

for a yarn. Writers bombard studios and indie producers with material, and are grateful and happy when a story is bought.

A man buys a horse for five bucks, Joe said. He can sell it for ten or nine hundred bucks. It's his horse.

But Joe learned a lesson.

Joe is going to make sure the next time he sells anything outright that in the contract there will be a clause to the effect that if the producer buying Joe's story decides to sell it to another producer, Joe will be entitled to one third, one quarter or one half of the money over the original purchasing price.

Yes, Joe is learning slowly.

But if the triple A were here, Joe would be protected completely. He would only lease Sunny Side to Charlie Wills. Charlie would never be able to sell it to anyone else for a profit.

It would be **verboten** for Charlie to do anything with Sunny Side . . . except produce it.

And then, maybe seven years later, maybe five years later, if another producer thought Sunny Side was worth one hundred thousand for a remake, Joe would be on the sunny side of the bargaining counter.

P.S. But don't get me wrong, I love Bill Wrinn.

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ECONOMICS FOR WRITERS

The original AAA plan is being considerably altered, but kept is its basic premise of organizing writers effectively. Its greatest enemies probably are writers themselves who, being such crashing occupational individualists, can't get used to the idea of working as a team in their own economic interests. Whatever may come of the AAA-Cain plan, it is generally felt that out of the boiling controversy will come certain financial reforms in writers' affairs.

The year saw authors' economics jump from a shy column in the Anniversary Variety to the front pages of newspapers all over the country. Even authors became aware that they had economics.

— Theodore Pratt in the 41st Anniversary Number of Variety.

I'M STANDING ON MY HEAD

HOWARD KOCH

WHEN I hear of the current attacks on free education, when I read articles from all over the country pouncing on any remaining vestige of independent or progressive thought, when I read the newspapers and listen to the radio screaming for misunderstanding and hostility toward a good half of the rest of the world, I realize that I'm living in a strange, strange time. What only two years ago was virtue is now vice; what was then a friend is now an enemy, what was then patriotic is now often called subversive. That's not a very easy adjustment. We find ourselves trying to maintain our sanity — trying to stand mentally upright in a world that's turned upside down.

In discussing this Alice in Wonderland era, I'm going to try what might be called an experimental approach. In order to get the proper perspective, I'm going to attempt figuratively to stand on my head. From that rather novel position I intend to report to you exactly what I see. Then if you like it, you can stand on your heads; if you don't — well then you can go on getting hit over them.

Much of my report will concern me personally but will have, I think, very general application. Instead of telling you my opinions of the forces that are attacking us — which you probably can guess — I'm going to try to see myself as they see me. From my reverse angle I intend to trace my own subversiveness from its very beginning.

I was born under Sagittarius, a red constellation when viewed from a southern clime. However, it seemed to have very little effect on the

SWG member **HOWARD KOCH**, screen writer, playwright and chairman of the Hollywood Writers Mobilization, has based this article on a report he made at a recent HWM forum on the freedom of expression.

first twelve years of my life. I can honestly say if I had a political opinion during those years I didn't know it. However, when I was in my teens the debate was raging around Woodrow Wilson's head on women suffrage.

It was during this struggle that Sagittarius began to needle my destiny and I ventured my first political opinion. A teacher asked me what I thought about women voting and I promptly replied "A woman's place is in the home" In later years I recalled that the teacher looked at me a little oddly. Alas, by that time I had reversed my position and had come to look upon women as at least partly human and therefore entitled to vote. I regret that reversal with all my heart. It was the first false step and opened the flood gate for all sorts of progressive notions.



My second confession is even more painful. During the nostalgic years of the once lamented depression I was in New York City trying to learn to write plays. I thought it was my business to observe all I could of life. Well, there was lots of it around those days. You could see it in Central Park existing in impromptu hovels. You could see it in long lines in front of employment offices on Sixth Avenue. You could find it in bewildered faces of people from Park Avenue to the Bowery. At least we called it life, but for some reason at the time it seemed inadequate. It didn't strike me as the very best human society could do. So in the next presidential election I voted for a man who didn't like it either. And a lot of other people didn't like it and they made the same mistake I did — they voted for Franklin Roosevelt. Remember — I'm standing on my head. Well, you know how things began to change. Housing projects rose where the "jungles" once had stood. The country began to plan — and human society began to function again. There were new roads, new dams, new security, new labor relations, new international relations, new hope.

At the time we thought these things were blessings — even some of the Republicans made that error. We didn't realize what these trivial blessings meant in the sacrifice of our liberty. You couldn't send prices sky-rocketing at the expense of the rest of the country; you couldn't cheat your neighbor by selling him watered stock; you couldn't even cut

down a tree without planting one in its place. Just when untrammelled individualism had got us literally back to the jungles here we were regulating our atavistic instincts and planning our bright destinies away.

However, that dangerous era seems about over. People have had enough. Or so they say. So we're about to begin all over again with the same people saying the same things they said back in the Twenties. They love natural forces, these people, and they don't even mind a few tidal waves and earthquakes thrown in. They're even talking about a new depression — a beautiful, unregulated depression. And if we're real good, maybe we'll even get a war. From my upside down position, the prospects look very rosy indeed.

Now to get back to my own life. My next mistake isn't so easy to correct and may well turn out to be fatal. I came out to Hollywood to become a screen writer and, compounding my crimes, I joined the Screen Writers' Guild and the Hollywood Writers' Mobilization. Little did I know that seven years later I'd be labelled subversive by the Daughters of the American Revolution, echoing the Chicago Tribune, echoing the Los Angeles Examiner, echoing the Hollywood Reporter, and so on down.

You know I always thought these venerable ladies were somewhat outside the current of contemporary affairs. I pictured them as perhaps in their early hundreds, wearing crinoline dresses on a Williamsburg estate, playing croquet on the courts just north of the slave quarters. I imagined their conversation to be mostly the affairs of Dolly Madison, perhaps scurrying for shelter when someone happened to mention Tom Paine. But no, these good ladies are on their patriotic toes. Having once been revolutionists themselves, they know all the signs. The Boston tea party took place on one coast — the next revolution may well begin on the other.



So here I am, a Roosevelt voter in a questionable occupation on a questionable coast. You'd think that was enough. But no, the worst was still to happen. In the early stages of the war, either by accident, or by the command of Joseph Stalin, depending on which papers you read, I

was selected by Warner Brothers to write the screen play of — Mission to Moscow.

Looking at it from this angle I realize I had some pretty odd ideas about that assignment. I believed my duty was to find out as many facts as I could about the Soviet Union and her relations with other countries and to present these facts in a simplified, semi-documentary form. The purpose was to give the American people a more objective understanding than they had previously gotten from the press. Since the Soviet Union was our ally in a war, this seemed a worthy undertaking. I knew as much about the Soviet Union as I did about Afghanistan. So I read, in addition to Mr. Davies' book, all the documented material I could get my hands on, including the minutes of the League of Nations and those of the Trotsky trial and all the speeches made in that period.

What I didn't understand, of course, was that a portion of this country was at war with the Soviet Union all the while. I had the naive idea we were all fighting fascism. I'm sure a lot of us had that idea. If I'd known the truth, as I can now see it clearly from this upside down position, I'd know exactly what to do. Instead of Litvinov, I would have made Franco the protagonist of Collective Security which the Soviet government was trying to break down. I would have made Trotsky the White Knight offering Hitler the keys to the Ukraine only after receiving a solemn promise he wouldn't advance a step beyond India. If I'd only known these things in time I'd be a hero today instead of a subversive character.

Well, I'm not going to stand in this difficult position taking all the blame on myself. It's a poor turncoat who doesn't involve his friends and colleagues. I have a sheaf of clippings — mostly from the Chicago Tribune and the New York Daily News — telling the world just what we Hollywood writers are up to. First of all, there's a lot of the usual talk about our being run by Communists and how our pictures are influenced by them. However, they really had to scratch around a little to find the pictures that were subverted. But give them credit. They came up with a few. Naturally Mission to Moscow occupies the place of — I was going to say honor. I forgot my reversed position. But here are some of the others, and listen to them carefully. You may never have looked upon them as dangerous to the American way of life before.

A Song to Remember by Sidney Buchman. You'll recall in that picture the Polish composer Chopin, being a sensitive person, was somewhat aware of the troubles of his people and devoted part of his genius to helping them. The idea of a musician being interested in people is something that no one-hundred-percent American will stand for — it is enough to make the Chicago Tribune foam at the mouth. The idea that art has anything to do with life is a notion that could only emanate from Moscow.

Then there's John Howard Lawson with Action on the North Atlantic. Jack makes the first page of the Tribune, by the way. The rest of us are back around page thirteen. The sins of that picture about the U. S. Merchant Marine are obvious. The cargo is bound for Murmansk. Apparently Mr. Lawson made the same mistake that I did in Mission. He thought Murmansk was a friendly port. In case of a remake of this picture, that's easily fixed. They sailed to Liverpool instead. No, I forgot about the Labor government. Calais? No, that wouldn't do — not the way things are going in France. Maybe they just don't sail. This picture, I'm sorry to have to say in public, has a double sin. When they're in port, the Merchant Seamen have a habit of going to their Union headquarters to find out when they're to ship out again. Imagine telling the American people that Merchant seamen belong to labor unions . . . and even seem to enjoy themselves at their local headquarters. On second thought, I suggest we don't remake this picture at all.

Then there's Song of Russia by Paul Jarrico and Richard Collins. With a title like that, I don't have to tell you what's wrong with this picture. It's curious how we were all laboring under the same misconception — that the Soviet Union was an ally.

On the other side of the coin is the Tribune's mention of Hitler's Children by Emmet Lavery. To be overzealous of dispraising fascist Germany is apparently just as culpable as praise for Soviet Russia.

Here's one on the list that really stumps me. The Ox Bow Incident by Lamar Trotti. You may recall that's the Western picture that says in effect that it's not a good idea to lynch a man because, among other things, he may turn out to be innocent. I honestly don't know how to clean this picture up for the new era. But Colonel McCormick's paper says "It is not hard to tell in what direction the propaganda of this pic-

ture is pointing.” And I have to agree with him — it isn’t hard. We don’t like lynching — or we didn’t until we stood on our heads. Well, there are a great many names on the Tribune’s subversive list — writers, actors, directors, producers, even executives. As the writer of the article says — it sounds like a list of Who’s Who in Hollywood. I won’t list their names here. They’re the usual people who are working for a more mature industry and a better world in general.

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I hope you don’t think I’ve treated a serious thing too lightly. I started out to write a serious piece. Then when I read this latest blast of clippings I found them so outrageous — so blatantly lacking in any semblance of sense — that I couldn’t dignify them with a serious answer. Their time-honored method is to dispense with any vestige of logic or honest appraisal of what they’re attacking. They have too much contempt for their readers to feel such things are necessary. Their technique is to establish fear-words by hammering them into the public mind with all the power of repetitive assertion in their press and over their radio. Then they connect the fear-words with anyone who shows any signs of wanting a decent world and decent relations between nations and people.

These attacks — past, and those still to come — and there’ll be many — may seem gauche and even humorous to us now — as these clippings appeal to me. But I want to call something to your minds. There was an awfully funny little man making speeches in Germany twenty years ago. He ranted against the same things — Communists, labor unions, liberals, internationalists, with the same frenzied illogic. And he seemed so ridiculous that most of us laughed at him then. Sensible people laughed all over the world. And one day, the laughter turned to tears.

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P E A C E I N O U R T I M E

GARRETT GRAHAM

Editor's Note: The Screen Writers' Guild has stood consistently for a policy of direct negotiation or arbitration in settlement of studio labor disputes. However, in accordance with The Screen Writer's policy concerning signed articles, the opinions and suggestions in this article are presented as the individual expression of Mr. Graham.

SOME sapient philosopher, whose name eludes me at the moment, once remarked that Man can make shift to live under a tyrant, but he cannot endure a busy-body. Unfortunately for my ego, I have no immediate prospects of becoming a tyrant, but I'm willing to risk being called a busy-body by following up my plea in the September issue of *The Screen Writer*, for more urbanity in Guild affairs, with a simple and practical plan to end for all time the internecine strife which has so long beset the motion picture industry.

The CSU-IATSE dispute which began in September may or may not have been adjudicated or temporarily patched up by the time this appears in print, but that will not permanently fix things until the cause of the trouble is removed.

The 1946 strike, or lockout, whichever it is, is a disgrace to all connected with the making of motion pictures. This includes all the producers, all the guilds and all the unions. It is not only preposterous but shameful that civilized and intelligent adults cannot settle economic

GARRETT GRAHAM, a screen writer with a distinguished record of achievement in Hollywood, is the author of a famous novel about the film colony, *Queer People*.

questions without the use of goon squads, fire hoses, tear gas, sap sticks, the overturning of automobiles and the beating up of strikers or non-strikers. The blame falls equally on all sides.

Maledictions have been hurled in all directions as if maledictions were a dime a dozen, and the community has waded knee-deep in poppycock. Anyone who disagreed with anyone else about anything is either a dirty Red or a plush-bottomed Fascist.

Without any credible substantiation, I have heard that Herbert Sorrell, of the CSU, is a militant Communist, in direct touch with Moscow, who is trying to make himself a Labor Czar.

I have heard that Richard Walsh and Roy Brewer of the IATSE are direct heirs of George Browne and Willie Bioff, about whom surely little more need be said; that Mr. Walsh keeps himself in control of the IATSE by the suppression of free elections, and that he is in the pay of the producers as Browne and Bioff were proved in Federal court to be.

I have heard that the 1946 strike, or lockout, was deliberately provoked by the producers in a carefully planned offensive to smash all unions and guilds; that various studios laid in supplies of tear gas and small arms ammunition, and engaged professional thugs to support, by violence if necessary, the producers' point of view.



What truth, if any, there may be in these various allegations I do not personally know. I'm sure the general membership doesn't know either. But we all have a right to know because we're caught in the middle. So are the actors and directors. All employed members of these guilds have had to face a personal decision as to whether or not they should cross picket lines, or take sides in this dispute which was none of their making. This is not only unfair, but absurd.

These three guilds have the power and prestige, by united action, to settle things once and for all; to end this periodic bickering which has made the industry ridiculous throughout the world.

The industry is not the Johnston office, the Producers Association, the Wall Street tycoons who handle the finances, nor their lieutenants who boss the studios. Certainly neither Mr. Sorrell nor Mr. Walsh is the industry. The Motion Picture Industry, and in this sense it should be

capitalized, is comprised of all the men and women who write, direct, enact, photograph, develop and print what is seen upon the screen.

Shakespeare got along all right without any sets, scenery or trick stage effects. He had something to say. If Hollywood has anything to say, it can be said, if need be, anywhere a camera can be set up. There is a hoary gag from the old silent days about a producer who squelched an ambitious director planning an expensive location trip. This producer declared — quite practically, too — “A rock’s a rock, and a tree’s a tree; shoot it in Griffith Park.” This could still apply. A lot of good pictures could still be made in Griffith Park. But no pictures can be made anywhere without the men and women who write, direct, enact, photograph and process them.

These are the people who could and should control the Motion Picture Industry, and I’ll sue anybody who calls me a Communist for saying so. Naturally, the various capacities in which we work necessitate many different agreements as to hours, salaries and working conditions. Each craft and trade must negotiate these for itself. But a broad basic agreement as to what constitutes fair practice and decent behaviour could easily be reached and enforced by those who actually create motion pictures.

Surely no one today will dispute the justice of collective bargaining. Capital practices it in every basic industry in the country. It is written into the laws of the land. Then no one can argue fairly that any trade, or guild, or group of workers or employers should have forced upon them leaders or representatives they do not trust, or in whom they have no confidence.

The screen writers could throw out their president, Emmet Lavery, any time they liked, although I’m sure he would rush to resign his arduous and unpaid job the first moment he suspected he did not have the confidence and respect of the membership for the patience and dignity, good taste and good humor with which he conducts our turbulent affairs. Then why can’t the carpenters, the painters, the set erectors and decorators, the projectionists and all other trades have the same privilege?

There will be no permanent peace in the industry until all these groups of workers have a chance to form their own autonomous organi-

zations and choose spokesmen and industry leaders in honest, impartially supervised elections without intimidation or fear of reprisal.

If the Conference of Studio Unions does not like the way Mr. Sorrell is performing they should kick him out and elect someone else in his place.

The picture business does not need the American Federation of Labor, or the C.I.O. to help put its house in order. It is regrettable that as fine a fellow as Bob Montgomery, with his unimpeachable personal character, his high professional standing, and his enviable war record, should have risked the brush-off he got when he flew to Chicago last October and asked the AFL executive council, or whatever it's called, to intervene and settle the IATSE-CSU jurisdictional dispute in Hollywood.

The bigwigs of this parent organization are sleek, fat, well-heeled fellows who have grown prosperous with things as they are. As long as Mr. Walsh doesn't interfere with their personal perquisites why should they meddle with his? Bob Montgomery is a bigger man than any of them. He never should have given them the opportunity to snub him.

Besides, the clamor for autonomous local unions and free and honest election of national officers might prove to be a dangerous heresy that would spread and infect other trades and crafts that have been ruled iron-handedly for so long by the same high salaried gents who wriggled out from under when the delegation from the Screen Actors' Guild tried to lay the Hollywood labor mess in their plump laps.

By firm, united action the talent guilds could say to Mr. Sorrell, Mr. Walsh, and the producers, and get away with it: "We didn't start this family quarrel and we're not taking sides, but we're damn' well going to stop it. The peace and dignity of the industry, and the livelihood of thousands of innocent bystanders, as well as the right of the public to continued entertainment, are more important than any or all of you as individuals. Undoubtedly there is an equitable solution to be found peaceably and quickly if everybody is on the level. If anybody in the dispute isn't on the level, that can be quickly and easily discovered and made public. Unless you all accept this premise and agree to go along, there won't be another word written, or a scene shot until you do. We are not striking or threatening to strike, but we have been reluctantly forced to take a hand to restore order, the same as the United States has

twice been forced into European wars to help bat Germany's ears down."

Some such speech as that, backed up by the combined strength of all the guilds, should have a most sobering effect upon all the brawling factions. The industry might limp along for a while with sets built, decorated and lighted by scab labor, but people like Bob Montgomery, John Ford, Charles Brackett, Bette Davis, Dudley Nichols and their peers cannot be snatched at random from bread lines.

I propose that the Screen Writers invite the other guilds to join in the forming of a small, compact board of forceful, unbiased members to set up machinery for an industry-wide plebiscite among all union locals to determine by honest and secret ballot who should represent whom. If Mr. Walsh and/or Mr. Sorrell are the rascals they have been called, this would be the democratic way to turn them out — or to retain them if they have the confidence of the workers. The method of voting on Academy Awards seems beyond criticism.

After this is done, the duly elected representatives of all the crafts and trades could meet the producers, with the board from the combined guilds acting as arbiter but not advocate, and settle all jurisdictional questions for all time.

I have seen in print somewhere a threat by Mr. Walsh that if things are not settled to suit him he will pull out all the projectionists and close the nation's theaters. If he runs their union by the same high-handed, dictatorial methods he is accused of using in the affairs of the Hollywood locals, maybe the projectionists would like to vote **on** Mr. Walsh in an honest election in which the votes are not counted **by** Mr. Walsh. This also could be, and perhaps should be, a part of the program.

If all of the hands grabbing for the reins in the Hollywood labor situation are as clean as their owners piously proclaim, then none of them could offer a valid protest to such a democratic plebiscite as has here been proposed, nor refuse to abide by the result.

"Peace in our time" was the shameful phrase coined by the late Neville Chamberlain in an attempt to excuse his betrayal of the Czechs at Munich. It could also become the proud boast of the several guilds in Hollywood if they will unite in grasping this opportunity to recapture and refurbish the dignity and good name of the industry in which we work and live.

“AVERAGING” INCOMES FOR TAXES

MORRIS E. COHN

THE author of a piece on income taxes for a non-technical journal should not yield to the temptation to offer apologies. Taxes, like death with which they are often coupled, are profoundly unattractive. But not uninteresting, just as any fate to which all men are subject is not uninteresting but compels the curiosity and attention of all.

This is a piece on a small phase of the federal income tax as it affects writers. It deals with a writer who spends three years or more on a work and who gets almost all of the monetary return during one year.

Income taxes are ordinarily computed on a twelve month basis. This method is founded as much on an accountant's fiction as on anything else. It may work out unfairly in many cases. If a man makes \$25,000 in one year and loses \$25,000 during the next year, his net income for the two year period may be nothing. But he will pay a substantial tax the first year and get no refund for his loss during the second year, (unless it is a "net operating loss," as defined in the statutes.) Anyone whose income fluctuates widely from year to year may find his tax not justly proportionate to his income over an extended period. Writers are of course among those most seriously affected by the disparity between the astronomical regularity of the tax collector and the dramatic irregularity of income.

Tax students have been troubled about this situation for years. Remember the "carryback" provisions you heard so much about? These amount to permission to carry back (or forward) to a profitable year

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certain losses suffered in another year, for the purpose of more accurately reflecting income over a period of several years. Now there is agitation for laws averaging income of all individuals over periods of three years and more.

But since 1942 writers (and some others) have had a limited right to do something like that — to average the income from a single piece of writing over a period of years. Anyone who produces a literary composition may take advantage of it if

he has himself worked on the composition over a period of at least thirty-six months; and

during one year the total income derived **from that composition** was at least eighty per cent of the total income **from it** for a period consisting of all of the past, the year in question, and the succeeding year.

Here is an example. You start to work on a novel in September 1943, and the publisher advances \$500 on the outline. You work on it through September of 1946, and on completion you get another \$500. It is published in January 1947, and has its biggest sale during that year. In 1947 you get royalties of \$10,000, and in 1948 you get another \$1,500. The period used in computing the income is the time from 1943 through 1948. The total income during that time from that work is \$12,500, of which \$10,000, or eighty per cent, is collected during 1947. This case is one which comes within the statute.



As you can see, it is 1948 by the time the determination can be made. The author has paid tax in 1947 based on the \$10,000 royalties received during that year. Now what advantage does the law give him?

He has the right to claim a refund by computing his tax for 1947 in an amount which is equal to the additional tax (if any) which would be payable for the years 1945, 1946, and 1947 if in each of those years he had got one-third of the \$10,000. So that instead of paying income tax for 1947 at rates applicable to the sum of his other income plus the whole of the \$10,000, he needs only to pay at the rate applicable to his income plus \$3,333 plus similar additions for 1945 and 1946. If he has had a loss during any of those years he may, if it is the right kind of loss,

be permitted to offset that income entirely. In effect, the income from that work is "averaged."

Often there is real difficulty in determining whether the monetary return from the work is ordinary income, and so subject to being averaged, or "capital gain," and thus (with some inconsequential exceptions) not within this provision of the law. If the proceeds are a capital gain they may not be "averaged," but on the other hand tax rates for capital gains are much lower than for ordinary income.

I do not think anyone would dare to set down a dogmatic assertion distinguishing ordinary income from capital gain in the case of writers. The tax decisions are full of instances in which experts, on the best authority, have been wrong. The underlying problem is a very interesting one and has ramifications which may affect the rights of authors in other fields. At what point and for what purposes, should the results of a writer's work be treated as property? What underlying philosophy of government should guide public authorities in treating the results of a writer's labor as a thing, — property, — or as a fluid, dynamic process, — services, — even though compensation for the work may be long deferred?

The arts of "execution," that is performance of a play or of music, present little difficulties, at least until fixed in wax or on film; these constitute services. The results of work in the plastic arts, sculpture and painting, likewise present little difficulty; these are actually property, and their transfer is a sale.

Writers, composers, and choreographers are unique⁶ in this that their work can be completed, is useful, and has exchange value without being embodied in any material thing. It is sheer labor, notwithstanding the fact that it may be put on paper to prevent its escape. No wonder the tax authorities, confusing economics with metaphysics, have had such difficulty in making up their minds when the transfer of a literary work yields ordinary income and when it yields a capital gain!

Speaking timidly and subject to the infinite variety of facts in different cases, these are the rules:

An outright transfer of all rights in a work is a sale, and the proceeds are capital gain. They are not subject to the averaging provisions

of the tax law, but are of course taxable at the lower rates applicable to capital gains.

The proceeds of a "sale" (license or lease) of any rights less than the whole property, such as motion picture or book rights, are not capital gain but are ordinary income. These proceeds may therefore be averaged, if the other conditions are met. The same is true if "earned income," that is salaries or fees received for services either as an employee or on being commissioned to do a book.

It is a small aid which this section (107(b) IRC) gives to the writer. Not often can it be availed of; nor, when applicable, does it often reduce taxes by a large sum. But it is not therefore negligible. Because the tax laws are for the most part so inexorable, and so unyielding, every advantage is important. And, in unusual cases, as in the sale of motion picture rights for an exceptionally large sum, this section is very helpful.

For many writers the principal value of this piece is not to furnish information by which they can themselves solve their tax problems, but simply to make them aware of a provision of the law which might save money. Your tax counsel knows about the law, but it may be well to remind him of it and to get his guidance not merely in making your tax return but in planning your income.

Tax provisions can be made a powerful stimulus or brake for any activity. The treatment accorded the author by tax legislation is not an unjust reflection of what the government thinks is his proper place in society. For the Authors League and its Guilds the problem is one of using this section of the law as a starting point toward more equitable tax provisions for writers, toward a concept of taxation which will adequately take into consideration the economic realities of living by the pen.



ODDS AND ENDS BEFORE SHOOTING

Time of Your Life, from the William Saroyan play, goes ahead of everything on the James Cagney slate. Feb. 15 is given as the starting date and screen play and other preliminaries will be hastened

accordingly. — Drama column in L. A. Times.

Of course a few preliminary trifles do have to be disposed of before shooting starts.

FORUM FOR FILM-GOERS

NOEL MEADOW

I TRUST I violate no confidence in pointing out that there appears to be no unanimity in the view, prevalent mainly in certain trade quarters, that the American motion picture has reached a state of perfection beyond which nothing can go.

Samuel Goldwyn, wincing audibly as he signed a payroll authorization, laid the blame on writers, who he said were becoming lazier as they got richer. Robert E. Sherwood, who by his own statement gives Hollywood as his sort of dilatory domicile, has retorted that the motion picture producers have bought the writer's body and have declared his soul to be a waste by-product. By so doing, says Mr. Sherwood, who must forgive me the paraphrased analogy, they have thrown away the pig and saved the grunt.

The non-professional moviegoer might have derived considerable entertainment out of this controversy, seeing as how all he has to do is to pay the bills, if he weren't suddenly bereft of his privileged status as an amused and wholly innocent bystander.

To his utter dismay, a panel of experts, discussing "Have the Movies Failed Us?" on the N. Y. Times radio forum, seized him by the ears, propelled him into the arena and indicted the poor devil as being the cancerous root of the whole miserable mess.

In stunned terror, he heard the charges itemized by crisp voices, shifting from male to female and back — just as in one of those stream-of-consciousness radio plays.

NOEL MEADOW, executive editor of *The Writers' Journal*, is a film producer and exhibitor and a previous contributor to *The Screen Writer*. He was associated in the production of such wartime films as *One Inch From Victory* and *What Price Italy*.

The audience must be educated to want better pictures, said the voice of Jan Struther, novelist and poet. The wretched victim, writhing suitably at this prospect, wondered who would do the educating. Miss Struther, presumably, didn't know either.

A male voice said movies were based wholly on our victim's response to them at the boxoffice (after the movies have been made, of course) and that his very failure to squirm and groan, when a certain picture is being eased down his throat, encourages Hollywood to choke him with a "cycle" (tidal wave) of same.

Damning as all this evidence sounded, our poor wretch was still not willing to cop a plea, and he found some solace in Bosley Crowther, the Times' film critic, who called for greater cinematic realism and much less of the stereotyped boy-meets-girl stuff.

As a matter of fact, Mr. and Mrs. John Q. are as guiltless as, in the circumstances, they can be. They are merely over-burdened, over-taxed and under-privileged by the motion picture industry.

The panel, which took convenient refuge in an unrealistic oversimplification — namely, that the public can correct all the film's evils simply by boycotting those they don't want to see — based that conclusion on the fantastic theory that the public should know very well what it wants to see even before it has seen it.

It might be well to consider the personnel of this panel of finger-pointers. Two are writers who have been responsible for the creation of film stories, and though they appear to have written good ones, that does not relieve them of the collective responsibility writers must share for poor films; one is a critic who has consistently denounced bad films, but who also must help symbolically to bear the blame accruing to his colleagues, who have at their command probably the best available remedy for the ill; there was also an official of the Motion Picture Association, a deeply culpable fellow who shrugged off the whole business with the exhausting cliché that the industry gives audiences what they want, and an assistant curator of a film library, who seems most guiltless of the lot.

It should not be necessary to point out that one doesn't choose a movie as one votes for a political candidate — on the basis of proved record, stated policy, etc. There is no preliminary referendum. It remains

purely hit-or-miss. Worse still, when the audience misses, it often means that the producer hits.

I intend to make no secret of my belief that the most disturbing of Hollywood's excesses are happily absent in the foreign-made films that have been reaching this country in increasing numbers and improving quality. In line with Mr. Crowther's comment, I might point out that the average foreign film packs more simple realism, more dramatic verisimilitude, than are contained in a vast cauldron of frothy Hollywood brew. Interest in foreign films in this country is increasing, and it is not without substantial reason that it is attracting, as highly partisan devotees, the top levels of our American film audience.

But foreign films are shown only in the largest cities. The bulk of our film audiences, to whom they are not available, must still take what they get.



The major film critics, representing the metropolitan press and the press services, do not enter the New Year like ordinary folk, who pile new resolutions upon last year's unkept ones. They come into January first with more or less clean hands by having put themselves on record as to what they believe to have been the passing year's best or ten best films. The terse listing has the virtue of avoiding the customary critical circumambulation, and to many of the compilers the itemization must be a brave and uncomfortable process of soul-baring.

Whatever ulterior pressures may influence their selections, they are not, at any rate, the identical pressures that guide the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences in handing out Oscars.

The 1946 accolades are on paper still warm and damp, and there is a great deal of unanimity in the choice of Samuel Goldwyn's Best Years of Our Lives, which is adult and intelligent entertainment. The lily is gilded by the presence of some of the American screen's most beloved personalities, namely Fredric March, Myrna Loy and Dana Andrews.

The listings, however, are unusual in that most of them mention, among the best, two made in England, Brief Encounter and Henry V. Those who have seen and admired these films will take heart in the

critical verdict, and commercial movie-making Hollywood can derive from this circumstance either a helpful warning or a threat.

In any event, it is surely occasion for reflection when twenty per cent of most listings go to foreign-made films. An important added consideration must be the uncommonly lavish appraisals that accompanied the selections of the year's ten best foreign-language films, generally headed by the pathetically low-budget *Open City*, with Marcel Pagnol's *The Well-Digger's Daughter* as the most frequent second choice, when it wasn't leading the list.

There is nothing in the present situation to assure that next year's selection of the best English-speaking films will not include four or five from Great Britain and, at the present rate of import, that critics will not have to coin new phrases to describe the year's foreign-language films.

Criticism of the American motion picture is usually offered in a spirit of pique or disillusionment, but it is not necessarily destructive criticism per se. It can usually be construed as constructive, stated negatively. A change in the American film story approach became commercially imperative with the war. Until American troops began to arrive in formidable numbers abroad, foreign patrons of our films were quite content to regard them as credible representations of life in an incredible nation.

If they found the American GI not a wholly credible individual, they also found him to be incredible in ways quite different from what our films had led them to expect. Many foreign soldiers and sailors had come to this country during the war, and they were astonished not to find us behaving according to Hollywood plan.

Consequently, they are losing — have indeed lost — confidence in the essential veracity of our films, which is something they get in their own.

Hollywood's quest for profits through foreign markets has boomeranged, in the very recent view of Britain's Herbert Morrison, Lord President of the Council. On January seventh last, Mr. Morrison, not without some elation, told British exhibitors that Hollywood has thus

earned its foreign money at the expense of American prestige and reputation.

"Many good Americans would agree," he said, "that Hollywood has pictured America falsely by over-sentimentalizing and over-glamorizing the U. S., and British film-makers must realize this is "a trap we can avoid."

Few shrewd observers of the art and function — to say nothing of the business — of the cinema could have called a shot with such beautiful accuracy, as did Mr. Morrison, a politician, when he added: "We must see that our contribution to the world output of films is of the highest quality — sincere, truthful, witty — using this new art form fully, and not to imitate the stage or anything else. . . . Indeed, the cinema in the right hands can become a great civilizing influence, as have been the great languages of the world, of which English is by no means the least."

The very existence of such a concept, expressed in the forceful terms of the profit-dollar, spurs hope for the film arts. The film writer, working within the limitations of his shackles, must seize the initiative — if necessary, by taking what the diplomatic boys term a "firm policy" — in implementing this concept.

It is completely obvious that the strictly unilateral approach of the writer alone will be ineffectual. All other levels of film-making must go along, but we may not be as badly off there as we often lugubriously suppose. Americans have a peculiar talent for the gung ho stuff, in the opinion of a Frenchman, Emil Bourcart, head of the newly-formed Western Hemisphere Films, which will distribute foreign-mades here. Discussing the French film men vis-a-vis their American counterparts, he recently said:

"Co-ordination is not a French quality; it's American. The French are clever individually, and not so clever in a group. With the Americans, it's the reverse."

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'KRIEGIES' BEHIND FOOTLIGHTS

FRED FREIBERGER

WHEN Phil Dreisen arrived at Stalag Luft 3, the German Prison Camp for flyers, I greeted him with "It's not too bad, we have a theatre where we put on plays and sometimes we see pictures."

"You mean even barbed wire can't protect me from that Hollywood tripe," he snarled.

My stomach and Phil's had revolved together through the air cadets, our dates had been interchangeable, and we had borrowed each other's good conduct ribbons, but through it all I had never realized he felt that way about Hollywood.

"Come," I said, "I will orient you in the theatre."

"Never mind that," he said, "where is this escape list I heard so much about in our lectures at the base? I want to put my name on it. I want to meet an O.S.S. man."

I patted him on the shoulder pityingly. "There are escapes and escapes," I said. "Are you a female impersonator?"

He glared at me.

"I will explain," I explained, "by explaining the theatre. It is an old ramshackle building. The seats are converted Red Cross crates, and the stage is built of scrap lumber."

"Where are the escape tunnels?" he demanded.

I ignored him. "We are surfeited with producers (even in prison camp everyone wants to be a producer), have a sufficient number of

FRED FREIBERGER is a SWG member now under contract at a Hollywood studio. He contributes this article as a reminiscence of his experience as a prisoner of war in Germany after the B-17 he was navigating was shot down over enemy territory.

directors, and an abundance of acting talent — male, of course. Seventeen hundred men in this compound alone. All those men and not one woman. That's our greatest problem." I breathed with dramatic depth. "We have a terrible time casting female parts."

"Nuts!" he said and stalked off in search of an exit, while I sighed in disappointment.

As a procurer for a producer I resorted to every trick in the book to get men to play women. We had no requirements. They could be short, fat, gangly and unphotogenic. Even the offer of a chocolate bar or a pack of cigarettes when they were going at twenty bucks a throw (I.O.U. endorsed by the Senior American Officer) seldom got a nibble.

I'll never forget the first play we put on, Charlie's Aunt. We managed to cajole a couple of hard-bitten characters into skirts for the necessary parts. It was brutal. After that play, the gag that yucked from mouth to mouth was "That was no lady, that was a bombardier."

When I was first shot down, this problem of filling female parts was nonexistent, for at that time the Germans had not yet separated the R.A.F. from the A.A.F. The English, and this is not a slur on their masculinity, handled girls' parts as expertly as they manipulated their Lancasters. When they were made up as women, those of us backstage would speak softly, be shocked if we let slip any profanity and had to rationalize like hell before using the same latrine.

The English carried their devotion to character too far. I know, from a personal experience.

They needed a "girl" jitterbug-American. Chocolate bars, plus cigarettes had no effect on this one, so I was "IT." I didn't object too strenuously to them dabbing powder, rouge and lipstick on my face, and dressing me in a padded sweater and skirt, but then they insisted that I shave my legs. They refused to believe that that was too much for me until I ripped off my gay deceivers in resignation. They relented then and permitted me to take my legs on the stage in all their hirsute beauty.

Another problem we continually faced was getting our costumes on time from Berlin, due to the fact that their transportation system was being continually manhandled by the allied air forces. The costumes were rented for fabulous prices, but finances were no worry. The Third Reich allotted to each of us monthly the meager number of marks they

paid their officers of equal rank. These marks went into a community pool. Half of this money we donated to the enlisted men's camps and the other half we used for our own needs, which were mostly theatre. There were a few other drains on this pool such as the Nazis' charging us enormous sums for the pumping of water into escape tunnels we were always digging, and purchases of ersatz merchandise we were permitted to make from the outside.



Our productions always played to full houses in spite of the shortcomings of costumes and casting. In fact so vital did the Kriegies (short for Kriegsgefangenen, meaning prisoners of war) consider the theatre for the retention of their sanity that in the winter of '44-'45 when the Nazis cut our coal ration to a bare trickle, the Kriegies elected to go cold in their barracks so that the theatre could be properly warm in order that the "Show could go on."

Each production ran for four days so that every man could get to see it. Some Kriegies wanted to see the show more than once. This brought up the problem of counterfeiting of tickets. We used, for tickets, the cardboard boxes in which came "Players" cigarettes, a brand of tobacco torture which came to us with English Red Cross parcels. Various code numbers were used on the tickets, but the counterfeiters were always in there pitching. Nobody was ever really deprived of seeing a performance even if they had to stand, so nobody really cared about counterfeiting and the actors were flattered, which made everyone happy.

The scripts for our plays were supplied by the Y.M.C.A., and such plays were produced as *Night Must Fall*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *The Dover Road*, some of O'Neill's one-acters and many others, including originals.

The pictures we saw were *The Male Animal*, *The Spoilers*, *Orchestra Wives*, and *The Gay Divorcee*. I always found that my Hollywood-hating buddy, Phil Dreisen, saw these pictures at least twice, in spite of the fact that he remained vitriol-tongued about the business of picture making. I suspected him of being the leader of the counterfeiters.

He really gave me a hard time of it when the Corsican Brothers was

shown. Somehow or other the sound track had been sabotaged and the dashing figures on the screen were accompanied by a constant irritating unintelligible string of gibberish.

When I saw Phil after the showing I tried to beat him to the punch with "Well, you can't blame that on Hollywood. The sound - - "

"Don't apologize for that picture, that's the most intelligent dialogue I ever heard come out of a Hollywood production."

Then I had to listen to a two hour dissertation about the drivel that comes out of Hollywood, but retribution was on the way.

At the end of January 1945, the Russians had driven to within twenty-five miles of our camp. The Nazis evacuated us hurriedly. We put every article of clothing we owned on our backs, carried as much food as we could and marched in a circuitous route from Sagan to Spremberg, a distance of a hundred miles. We were packed into freight cars so snugly that we had to sit folded up. We didn't mind this too much, as it was cold as a witch's titillating laugh, and we were happy for the warmth forced upon us.

Three days later we were pried off the box cars into the camp at Moosburg. This **was** a prison camp, and we were to spend three miserable months in it before liberation. But just short of liberation I found a measure of satisfaction in Phil's rehabilitation.

"What happened to this great Hollywood you're always talking about?" he sneered. "They are a lousy example of American enterprise. Where's their distribution? Where's their product?"

"I thought you hated Hollywood!"

"I never found that O.S.S. man," he said bitterly, "and if I don't get to see at least the Corsican Brothers, I won't be surprised if I go around the bend." Then he added thoughtfully, "There are escapes and escapes."

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SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD, INC.

1655 NO. CHEROKEE AVE., HOLLYWOOD 28, CALIFORNIA
AFFILIATED WITH AUTHORS' LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.

OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE BOARD, THE SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD: PRESIDENT, EMMET LAVERY; 1ST VICE-PRESIDENT, MARY McCALL, JR.; 2ND VICE-PRESIDENT, HOWARD ESTABROOK; 3RD VICE-PRESIDENT, HUGO BUTLER; SECRETARY, F. HUGH HERBERT; TREASURER, HAROLD BUCHMAN. EXECUTIVE BOARD: MELVILLE BAKER, HAROLD BUCHMAN, HUGO BUTLER, JAMES M. CAIN, LESTER COLE, PHILIP DUNNE, HOWARD ESTABROOK, F. HUGH HERBERT, TALBOT JENNINGS, RING LARDNER, JR., RANALD MacDOUGALL, MARY McCALL, JR., GEORGE SEATON, LEO TOWNSEND. ALTERNATES: MAURICE RAPF, GORDON KAHN, ISOBEL LENNART, VALENTINE DAVIES, HENRY MYERS, DAVID HERTZ. COUNSEL, MORRIS E. COHN. ASSISTANT SECRETARY, ALICE PENNEMAN.

E D I T O R I A L

THERE have been several recent statements by producing companies of their intention to reissue a large number of previously made films.

While all of us in the industry are pleased to have made pictures of such lasting quality that they merit revival, and in their way may even become classics, it is none the less clear that it is money out of our pockets, which makes our pleasure less complete. For, each time a picture which was made in an earlier year is reissued, it replaces one unmade picture which will not be issued at all; if it takes two, four or whatever is the average number of writers to complete a script, then there are just that many writing jobs which we will never get. Exact statistics are not available because all the studios have not stated their program in regard to reissues, but MGM has announced 22. That alone, when multiplied by the modest average of 4, makes 88 jobs gone. Add 4 times what the other studios announce and the prospect is unpleasant.

Of course we are not proposing a ban on reissues. Fine plays are revived, fine books are republished and fine pictures should certainly be

reissued. The difference is that the fine plays and books pay royalties each time they appear; the fine pictures pay only the Studios.

Your Board feels that this concerns actors and directors too, since their work appears in reissues along with ours. Therefore we have approached their two Guilds, with the proposal that we work together in getting proper remuneration. Both have responded favorably and are setting up committees for the purpose. Naturally there will be complications and a formula will have to be found which will take into account the Studios' diminishing returns on reissues, the definition of precisely what a reissue is and other factors, but if the three Guilds jointly apply themselves to the problem it can be solved. The three, working as one, can also bring about an agreement with the Studios which will be fair to all.

Taking a long view, there is another, even more unpleasant possibility in the free use of reissues. If the time ever comes when we have to make a stand for our rights, with or without other organizations, it is not inconceivable that the public will be fed a year-long diet of "classics." BMI did it when it was fighting ASCAP and made a much better deal than would have otherwise been possible; but whereas they did it with Stephen Foster, we would find our own works used against us. Our contract expires in less than two years. The Studios' threat to use their "backlog" to fight the AAA holds good for whatever purpose, and will until backlogs have to be paid for when used.

That situation will not confront us in the future if we attend to the immediate problem. That is, to be recompensed when work we did in the past is used again, which otherwise only serves to deprive us of work we would have today.

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S . W . G . B U L L E T I N

A World Film Workers' Congress: The following communication has been received by the Screen Writers' Guild from the International Trade Union Committee of Motion Picture Industry Workers:

During the International Film Festival which took place in Cannes, we had the pleasure of coming into contact with a certain number of foreign workers. After two meetings and following the call put out by the intellectual and manual workers of the French Motion Picture Industry, the following motion was adopted:

"The undersigned film workers gathered in Cannes October 3, 1946,

"After having taken cognizance of the call put out October 2nd by the Unions of French workers and technicians:

"Considering that the establishment and maintenance of peace constitute the essential objective and duty of all intellectual and manual workers the world over,

"Considering that this duty is particularly the responsibility of workers and technicians of the film industry, since the film, through its circulation capacity, can be a powerful weapon in the service of peace,

"Declare:

"(1) That they will bend all their efforts to obtain the agreement of their respective Trade Unions and organizations toward the creation of an International Film Committee affiliated with the World Federation of Unions,

"(2) That they consider that the first objective of the said organization should be the calling of a formative Congress for this International Committee of Film Workers and broad participation therein; that the Congress should be held at the latest in May 1947,

"(3) That they undertake to have their respective Trade Unions organizations study the most appropriate form to be

adopted during the pre-formative period, this form being, if conditions warrant, an International Committee,

"(4) That they consider it necessary to form a provisional secretariat the task of which will be:

"On the one hand to make contact with all International Trade Union organizations, including those which had no representative present at Cannes,

"On the other hand to prepare in conjunction with Trade Union organizations a working plan and an agenda for the formative Congress, as well as proposed statutes for the International Committee of Film Workers,

"(5) That they personally authorize the Trade Unions of Technicians and Workers of the French Motion Picture Production Industry to constitute the Provisional Secretariat at 92 Champs-Elysees, Paris 8,

"(6) That they constitute themselves as a provisional Executive Committee until the formative Congress."

Signed at Cannes October 3, 1946

By: Edmundo Ferreira de Almeida —
Portugal

Rakia Ibrahim — Egypt
Georges Toeplitz — Poland
Ghetan Anend — India
Alexander Show — England
Francis Bolen — Belgium
Simon Van Collem — Holland
Francesco Pasinetti — Italy
Bellemare — Canada
Gosta Werner — Sweden
P. E. Sales-Gomes — Brazil
B. Stepaneck — Czechoslovakia
J. Gremillon - Ch. Chezeau —
France
Youthkevitch — U.S.S.R.

We are certain that you will understand the full importance of this first step, and that after your organization studies the question, you will be willing

to give us your agreement for the organization of a first Congress.

As soon as we have received your approval, we will undertake the setting up of a working plan and an agenda for the formative Congress, which will be given to all motion picture Trade Union organizations of the entire world which will have signified their intention of joining with us.

We request that you give us an answer as rapidly as possible.

International Trade Union Committee
of Motion Picture Industry Workers.
92 Champs Elysees, Paris.

IATSE's Reply: At the Nov. 13, 1946 membership meeting the SWG adopted a resolution calling attention to printed statements attributed to Richard Walsh, president of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, to the effect that IATSE should be given full jurisdiction over all studio employees. The SWG pledged opposition to such claims, warned against any IATSE attempt to interfere with SWG autonomy, and called upon Eric Johnston, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, to state whether or not Mr. Walsh had made sweeping jurisdictional proposals to the producers. This resolution was embodied in a press release Dec. 11.

Following is a reply from the IATSE office of Mr. Roy Brewer:

The statement of the Screen Writers' Guild released December 11th, calling upon Eric Johnston to clarify the Motion Picture Producers Association attitude on an imaginary request of the IATSE for jurisdiction over all motion picture industry employee groups is, in the opinion of the IATSE, an attempt on the part of the Screen Writers' Guild to create some fantastic threat by the IATSE against the established unions and guilds in Hollywood.

Like the people with whom they have associated since their existence, The Screen Writers' Guild talks unity but promotes disunity. This release is

merely another step in that direction. The IATSE does not want, and never has wanted, jurisdiction over any other legitimate union. The statement accredited to President Walsh is absolutely and completely false. President Walsh never made such a statement to Eric Johnston. Eric Johnston does not have within his power the granting of jurisdiction to any union. The IATSE agreed last October to have an impartial A. F. of L. Committee determine all jurisdictional questions. The IATSE lived up to its agreement and accepted the findings of that Committee. Other unions did not, yet the Screen Writers' Guild, which now points the finger at the IATSE, supported the unions which broke their word and created another disastrous studio strike.

The Screen Writers' Guild cannot point to one single instance where the IATSE has committed one act since the election of President Walsh that in any way jeopardizes or injures the jurisdictional rights of any other union, yet the Screen Writers' Guild has actively assisted the Painters' Union to take into its membership stenographers, clerks, typists, publicity men, and many others who have absolutely no connection whatsoever with the Painters' Union. The plain truth is that the Conference of Studio Unions, through the Painters' Union, has maintained a constant program of aggression in the studios during the past several years. In this program they have had the full support of the Screen Writers' Guild, as well as other fellow traveler organizations.

If the Screen Writers' Guild wants to be respected as a legitimate trade union, it should act as one. If it wants its autonomy respected, it should respect the autonomy of other unions. It has not respected the autonomy of the IATSE, but has attempted to use its influence to interfere in the internal affairs of the IATSE. Only last week the Executive Secretary of the Guild resigned because the Guild would not vote \$10,000 to assist the group who are violating laws of this Alliance and

have attempted to assume authority in complete violation of the Constitution of the IATSE which they had sworn to uphold. This unfortunate statement on the part of the Guild, on its face, violates the purpose for which the Guild states it was issued. The IATSE has no desire or inclination to do anything to interfere with the autonomy of the Screen Writers' Guild. We wish that were true of the Guild insofar as the IATSE is concerned.

Johnston Office Reply: To the SWG resolution calling on President Eric Johnston of MPAA to make a statement concerning IATSE President Richard Walsh's asserted claims for complete studio union jurisdiction, the Guild received the following reply from the Washington office of the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc.:

Mr. F. Hugh Herbert, Secretary,
Screen Writers' Guild, Inc.,
1655 No. Cherokee Avenue,
Hollywood 28, California.

Dear Mr. Herbert:

We have your letter of December 9, addressed to Mr. Eric Johnston, enclosing a copy of a resolution passed at the annual meeting of the Screen Writers' Guild. It has been received in the absence of Mr. Johnston who is at his home in Spokane.

The resolution specifically asks Mr. Johnston to comment on a newspaper quotation in which Mr. Richard Walsh is mentioned as having emphasized to Mr. Johnston that IATSE should have complete work jurisdiction in Hollywood studios. Mr. Johnston has authorized me to send you the following reply:

"Neither Mr. Walsh nor anyone else connected with IATSE ever made any such statement to me."

(Signed) JOYCE O'HARA
Assistant to the President

United Annual Appeal: The Guild is again active in the Annual United Appeal currently being conducted by the Permanent Charities Committee of the Motion Picture Industry. Sheridan Gibney is the new Guild representative on the Committee's Board of Directors and other Guild members on the Permanent Charities Committee are Jane Murfin, Francis Faragoh, John Larkin, and Randal MacDougall.

As this issue goes to press, the Appeal has obtained subscriptions amounting to \$756,673 from 14,107 donors in the industry. Of this amount, 134 members of the Screen Writers Guild have contributed \$46,325.

The following members are captains in charge of the drive for the Guild in the studios:

COLUMBIA — Louella MacFarlane,
Ray Schrock, Edward Huebsch.

EAGLE-LION — Erna Lazarus, Robert Kent

MGM — Joe Anson, Tamara Hovey,
Dorothy Kingsley, Robert Nathan, Harry Haislip, David Chandler

MONOGRAM — Barney Sarecky

PARAMOUNT — Edmund Hartman,
Robert Welch, Francis Faragoh

REPUBLIC — Franklin Adreon, Olive Cooper, Sol Shor

RKO — Dan Mainwaring, Robert Pirosh, William Roberts

FOX — Valentine Davies, Mary McCall, Jr., Martin Berkeley

UNIVERSAL - INTERNATIONAL —
Harry Kurnitz, Ian Hunter

WARNER BROTHERS — John Collier,
Edwin Gilbert

Last year the Screen Writers Guild made 307 subscriptions to the Annual Appeal for a total of \$94,247.50. The present report compares favorably to that at a comparable date last year when there were 110 pledges for \$36,867.50.

CASE OF THE TALENT GUILDS V S. PERSONAL ADVERTISING PRESSURES

For several years the Screen Writers Guild has been under attack by W. R. Wilkerson's Hollywood Reporter. The following exhibits in the case of talent organizations versus high pressure advertising tactics are presented as relevant, competent and material:

EXHIBIT A from the impartial pages of the Los Angeles Daily News of January 6, 1947:

FILM PLAYERS OPEN WAR ON AD PRESSURE

Hollywood's top film players have revolted against what they consider a long-standing form of legal blackmail — personal advertising in motion picture trade papers.

The Screen Actors Guild announced today that 95 per cent of its members who spend money for advertising had agreed to resist any pressure used by these publications.

The SAG board of directors, headed by President Robert Montgomery, adopted a statement of policy declaring advertising in special editions "is against the best interests of the actors."

It urged them to refrain from such practices.

The actors, it appeared, needed no such urging.

They were pretty unanimous in terming trade paper advertising as "legal blackmail" and those who buldgeoned them into advertising as "leeches."

Supported strongly by the membership, the SAG board adopted a six-month program on a voluntary basis of "no personal advertising."

To implement the statement of policy, the guild created a permanent standing

committee of seven members, to be known as the Anti-Pressure Advertising Committee.

If not successful in the six-month period, the guild will consider adopting a strict rule, enforced by disciplinary action against those who violate it.

The Screen Writers Guild has had such a rule for nearly eight years; writers who insert personal advertising in trade publications are subject to fines, even suspension from their organization.

The SAG statement, sent to each member yesterday, named no specific publications.

But privately, the actors took down their hair and said they particularly had in mind the Hollywood Reporter, owned by William R. Wilkerson.

Daily Variety and the Film Daily, also widely known trade publications, would also suffer under the new edict.

And the actors agreed to be quoted — if their names were not used. They said they didn't fancy retaliatory action.

The actors were unanimous in charging they were figuratively clubbed into buying advertising space under pain of getting their names into Wilkerson's bad book.

In such circumstances, they said, they were subjected to unfavorable criticism of their professional work in reviews of their latest pictures.

They charged that they became targets for vilification, including such charges as addiction to Communism, or drink.

Or, they said, they were completely blacklisted, and their names never appeared in the publications.

As a preliminary to its action, the Screen Actors Guild sent a questionnaire to all its members, leaving a nice large space for "comments."

The SAG declined to give out the text of the "comments" but from individuals polled last night came these reactions:

"I was told by a leading trade paper, 'If you don't give us an ad, we shall ignore you in the preview writeups.' I didn't take the ad. My name was omitted completely in said review. All ads I have taken have been merely for the purpose of avoiding the displeasure of the publication."

"The practice of personal advertising in the trade papers, which is just legal blackmail, should be done away with completely."

"Every solicitation for advertising in the trade papers has been with some reference to the kind of review I could expect if I didn't take an ad."

Neither the Hollywood Reporter nor Daily Variety, two principal trade publications, had been informed of the SAG action yesterday, they said, and had no statement to offer.

"Daily Variety never has slanted a review against a person because he or she refused to advertise," said Duffy Cornell, managing editor.

Managing Editor Frank T. Pope of the Reporter said he had not been officially informed of the move, although he said he had heard reports of it.

Wilkerson, publisher of the Reporter, is a Hollywood institution. At 52, he has built a handsome fortune through his publication and a string of restaurants.

He promoted the Trocadero, a Sunset Strip nightspot that took in \$3,800,000 in less than three years. He promoted Ciro's. He sold both, but still operates the Restaurant LaRue.

In partnership with Bugsy Siegel, Wil-

kerson recently opened the fabulous Flamingo in Las Vegas, Nev., which boasts the largest gambling casino in the West.

EXHIBIT B is the official statement of the Screen Actors' Guild, on which the L. A. Daily News article is based. The SAG statement follows:

IMPORTANT: GUILD POLICY ON PERSONAL ADVERTISING IN TRADE PAPERS

Dear Member:

In the trade paper advertising survey recently completed by the Guild, more than 95 per cent of the motion picture actors who spend money for advertising favored action by the Guild to protect actors against pressure to advertise against their will.

In the survey, the most common complaint voiced by actors was that they were threatened with unfavorable reviews of their roles in new pictures and discriminatory editorial treatment if they failed to advertise in special editions and special sections of the trade press, including complimentary editions, annual editions, holiday editions, anniversary editions, and special advertising sections published on completion of every picture. A substantial number of members have been subjected to this and other forms of pressure to advertise in the trade papers.

Your Board has studied carefully the advertising survey returns. While a tremendous majority — over 95 per cent — favored action by the Guild, there was not anything approaching unanimity on what type of action should be taken, one group of actors favoring a strict Guild rule banning most types of personal advertising in the trade papers and the other group preferring a Statement of Policy. Some actors suggested that a Statement of Policy be tried out first and if this was not successful, then the Guild might adopt a strict rule.

After long and thorough consideration of the problem involved, the Board has

voted unanimously the following program of action:

1. The Guild adopts the following Statement of Policy:

The Guild recognizes that legitimate advertising plays a vital role in American life and the Guild has no wish to curb personal advertising by actors when actors of their own free will desire to advertise and such advertising is of benefit to them. However, the Guild finds that personal advertising in the special editions and special sections of the trade press is against the best interests of actors and urges all members to refrain from placing such advertising. As to advertising in the regular pages of the regular editions of the trade papers, the actor should be free to exercise his individual judgment, unhampered by pressure from the publication seeking such advertising.

2. In order to implement the above Statement of Policy, the Guild has created a new, permanent standing committee, to be known as the Anti-Pressure Advertising Committee, composed of seven Board members. The function of the Anti-Pressure Advertising Committee will be to help actors resist pressure to take advertising they do not want. Any Guild member who is subjected to pressure to take advertising against his wishes will report the facts to the Committee. After investigation, the Committee may recommend to the Board a complete ban on personal advertising by Guild members in any publication which continues to exert pressure on actors to buy advertising space they do not want.

3. The above program is adopted for a period of six months. If it is not successful in stopping pressure advertising, the Guild will consider adoption of a strict rule against personal advertising in

the trade papers, which would be enforced by disciplinary provisions.

Sincerely,
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SCREEN ACTORS GUILD

EXHIBIT C is the letter written by F. Hugh Herbert, secretary of the Screen Writers' Guild, to Robert Montgomery, president of the Screen Actors' Guild:

January 9, 1947

Dear Mr. Montgomery:

Heartened by the announcement in the daily press that the Executive Board of the Screen Actors' Guild has adopted a resolution designed to eliminate personal advertising in the trade papers, the Screen Writers' Guild, which took this step many years ago, hastens to record its hearty approval of your action and to offer its most sincere congratulations.

In the years that have elapsed since advertising was outlawed by the Screen Writers' Guild, our members have saved countless thousands of dollars; and to offset this saving we have experienced no disadvantage beyond the minor irritation that our names are never mentioned in the list of credits as printed in the Hollywood Reporter.

We have survived this slight abrasion to our egos and we have no doubt that your members will endure it with equal fortitude and with even greater economic savings.

We look forward to the day when the Directors' Guild will follow your example and ours; and we cannot refrain from speculating upon the nature and substance of future reviews in trade papers which, by analogy with our own case, will have imposed upon them the puzzling but obvious necessity of mentioning no names whatsoever.

Cordially,
F. Hugh Herbert, Secretary

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REPORT AND COMMENT

HOLLYWOOD, WE LOVE YOU

Samuel Grafton

It is in movie making that the Mexicans seem most tamely to follow the American lead and to omit those gay adaptive touches which amount, if carried far enough, to an assertion of national character. Mexico has made more than one fine picture of course, but among the intelligent there runs the complaint that too much of the industry's product is concerned with tales of cowboys, the Charros, and the hacienda life of forty years ago. (With songs, too.)

The great studios here are self-consciously modern. The Churubusco plant which I saw seemed for its size, fourteen stages, as fine as anything in Hollywood. But there was no writers' building. There is no writer under contract to any of the studios. There was not even a writer's agent in the country. Scripts are bought in the marketplace (from whoever chooses to write them) on speculation, at from five thousand to, say, fifteen thousand pesos or one to three thousand dollars.

Someone may be called in to make an adaptation at as much again, but while an average Mexican film costs about a fifth as much to produce as an average American film the cost of writing it seems to be a tenth or a twentieth or a fiftieth. This, plus the fact that the writer has neither desk nor status in the industry, may explain why Mexican films do not occupy a place in the world like that held by Mexican paintings, for in work which depends basically on writing, the writer must have place and power, just as a bar-

bershop which expects to rise and glow needs to have in it proud and skillful barbers.

There is not even anyone in Mexico who makes his living as a novelist or playwright. The novelist, Rafael Munoz, is in the government. The distinguished playwright, Rudolfo Usigli, is in the diplomatic service. The novelist, Gregorio Lopez y Fuentes, is the editor of a newspaper, *El Universal*.

The thing is all mixed up with the revolution, too, for movie producers complain that Mexico's leading writers look down on screen work, that all they want to write about is revolutionary problems of 1910 and other such bygone years. The Charro pictures are based on the life of long ago, too, but never mind. The trouble may also be due to the fact that Mexican writers are so closely linked with the government and to that fate which compels Mexican intellectuals to be continuously concerned about Indians who cannot read, whatever the reason.

There has not been a growth here of those towering independent figures, powerful established writers, like those of Britain and America who come in time to be prime movers and sources of energy. One does not know whether American production here will change the picture much.

American work seems to be adaptation of English and American literary properties. RKO is making Maxwell Anderson's "Winterset" at Churubusco, with wonderful sets, in an adaptation called "Bajos Fondos," or "Lower Depths," by Salvado Novo, a clever newspaper columnist. One sees in striking form in the movie industry what air space there is between the industrialization program and the revolution on which it has been superimposed

This description of the screen and screen writing situation in Mexico by SAMUEL GRAFTON, the distinguished columnist, is reprinted by permission of the New York Post Syndicate Inc., Copyright 1946, New York Post Corporation.

and how little contact there is between them, even though the second is, at the moment, cheering for the first.

RWG MOVES TO PROTECT WRITERS' RIGHTS

Aubrey Finn

The Radio Writers Guild has appointed a committee to explore the possibilities of establishing a "subsequent rights" script bureau to market licenses for radio performances of material owned by its members.

In this area, the practice of licensing single radio performances of scripts is quite general. As a result, many members of the Guild are owners of valuable properties to which they have the right to grant licenses for further radio performances. However, networks seldom rebroadcast material and most writers have been unable to market second broadcast rights.

That there is a broad market for these properties is evidenced by the many inquiries received by the Guild from independent stations in all parts of the country concerning purchase of scripts. Too, the FCC, in its famous Blue Book, encouraged the origination of local live shows and the use of local talent. Apparently, acting talent is easier to come by than writing talent and many of the stations have hesitated to produce live shows because of the lack of suitable scripts.

The proposed bureau would serve these smaller users of material. It is contemplated that a catalogue be prepared listing the various shows of Guild members with a brief description of each. The catalogue will be available to all possible users—stations, little theater and school groups, advertising agencies, etc. Only scripts which have already been broadcast would be listed. Prices will be standard and will probably vary according to the size of the

station. All money received will be paid to the writers whose scripts are used minus a small commission to the script bureau to cover the costs of its operations.

The plan has the enthusiastic support of the membership. Many are optimistically predicting that writers will discover that the value of subsequent rights greatly exceeds the value of first performance rights over networks.

A BRITISH VIEW OF FILMS AND HOLLYWOOD

Robert Shaw

The British not only produce some excellent movies; they also write about their movie problems with the humor and sharp insight rarely encountered in the U. S. outside The Screen Writer, and with the scholarship which is the special characteristic of our own Hollywood Quarterly.

From England comes the first issue of a new motion picture quarterly, The Penguin Film Review, edited by R. K. Neilson Baxter, Roger Manvell and H. H. Wollenberg. Its statement of policy says it is completely independent of financial ties with the film industry, either directly or through advertising revenue. It promises a survey of the cinema from a wide international standpoint. It will deal with both the technology and the art of the motion picture. The first issue manages to do this without being stuffy. That is quite an achievement.

Anthony Asquith, the British director, discusses motion picture progress from the flea circus nickelodeon days to Brief Encounter and Best Years of Our Lives. He analyzes directing techniques, and shows how Griffith, the Germans, Chaplin and the Russians might treat a scene in which a young woman in a fit of passion has stabbed her lover to death.

Nick Grinde presents a grimly amusing picture of the operation of the Hollywood

AUBREY FINN is counsel and executive secretary of the Radio Writers Guild in Hollywood.

ROBERT SHAW is director of publications for the SWG.

B-hives. Sinclair Road, organizing secretary of the Federation of Documentary Film Units, writes about movie influence on world public opinion. There are mature surveys of recent film developments in Britain, France, Italy and Russia.

Interesting to note in this very British publication is the tendency to take recent British pictures less seriously and Hollywood pictures more seriously than they are taken by many of the more erudite American critics. Says Richard Winnington, film critic for the London News-Chronicle: "The recent triumphs of British films in Britain should not be allowed to intoxicate us. They are good, very good, but they lack sweep and they lack writers and they lack actors. By that I mean very few of the characters in British films really come alive. They are of the stage rather than of the world where the movie camera should focus. . . . It is appalling that an ugly hodge-podge of servant girls' lore like *The Wicked Lady* should mock at our own past, while a contemporary American film, *Kitty*, handles it with reverence and loving care, intelligence and charm."

But while praising some American films, the English critics and craftsmen agree in the main with Samuel Goldwyn. Winnington believes the movies as rep-

resented by Hollywood have finished their first half century rather tired and lacking in creative energy. . . . He writes: "The artist has been so humiliated, hectored and bedevilled by Big Business that the poor hack must be revitalized, nourished, cherished, respected and allowed to create again. For however much they may pretend to the contrary, the film cannot live without ideas from men of creative imagination."

Mr. F. E. Daniels, editor of the British Financial Times, says American movie companies are up against an increasingly nationalistic trend in terms of world film production. "Many high Hollywood officials," he points out, "confess that in the long run Hollywood is bound to lose a large part of its present dominance. This somewhat undeserved humility on the part of the American producers can well be dangerous for producers in other lands. For it means clearly that in terms of quality, Hollywood may be on its toes."

The subscription price of the Penguin Film Review is one dollar a year; the journal's American office is at 245 Fifth Ave., New York City. Herbert Margolis of Los Angeles is the American editor. He is preparing an article for *The Screen Writer* on UNESCO and its relation to films and writing.

SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD STUDIO CHAIRMEN

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C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

The following letter has been received from Sydney A. Sanders, literary agent, of 522 Fifth Ave. NYC:

In the December issue of The Screen Writer appears an article by Martin Field entitled READ 'EM AND WEEP. Following is a quotation from that article.

"Another writer, Aubrey Wisberg, has an interesting situation to report. His screen story, HEAVEN ONLY KNOWS, is being made into a high-budget picture by Seymour Nebenzal. Ernest Haycox, who wrote the adaptation of Wisberg's original, fell in love with the story so much that he proceeded to novelize the story. Since Haycox is a widely-read novelist, the book he has written promises to bring in hefty royalties. Mr. Nebenzal, delighted at the exploitation value of a best-selling novel based on his picture, seems happy to let the novelist keep all royalties. But the writer of the screen original disputes the right of the novelist to keep all the royalties. Al-

though he signed the standard "all rights" contract form, he feels he should, in all justice, get a share of the novel royalties and credit for his original story which inspired the novelization.

This is the kind of situation which absorbs writers' time and energy and would not arise when the "all rights" bogey is finally laid low through AAA."

I'm afraid I must advise you (as Mr. Haycox's representative) that the above statements are considerably inaccurate. Ernest Haycox has written, for Seymour Nebenzal a motion picture adaptation of an original screen idea by Aubrey Wisberg, but Mr. Haycox has not "novelized" the story, and he has no intention of doing so. There will not, therefore, be any book publication of any such novelization, for the latter does not exist.

In the interests of accuracy, and to correct an unfortunate impression that may be given by the above quotation, won't you kindly print the facts pertain-

WEST COAST THEATRE PRODUCTIONS

A project to originate on the West Coast first class theatre productions for possible New York and road showings has been initiated in Hollywood by the firm of Carr, Scott & Dinkin, theatre producers.

A statement from Harry L. Carr of the above firm follows:

"We will utilize the best available artists and theaters, attempting to raise the production standards to a quality New York level. Contracts that we make with authors will be in accordance with the Minimum Basic Agreement of the Dramatist's Guild.

"We believe the theater in this area has too long been a secondary imitation of Eastern and New York productions. Our complaint especially is against the lack of creative theater endeavor existent in a locality where so many creative artists reside and work. Most theaters in this region concentrate on doing what many other theatres have already done, with a very decadent result.

"Part of our concern is with the apparent general dearth of good, original plays, which seems to exist also in New York, as witness the start of the present season, and its majority of revivals. Therefore, we feel that a countrywide stimulus is necessary to have authors write for the theater, where current political and social expression can be dramatized.

"We feel certain that some of the members of the Screen Writers Guild must have play properties worthy of professional production, that have either not been previously submitted or not produced."

The address of Carr, Scott & Dinkin is 6130 Selma Ave., Hollywood 28.

ing to this matter in your next issue. A copy of this letter is being sent to Mr. Field.

SYDNEY A. SANDERS.

Martin Field Replies

Dear Mr. Sanders:

I was delighted to receive your letter because I feel that its publication in *The Screen Writer*, together with this reply, is a fine tribute to the effectiveness of our Guild magazine.

Your claim of inaccuracy is based on your statement that Mr. Haycox's novelization of Mr. Wisberg's story does not exist. Contrariwise, Mr. Wisberg was told that there was a novelization. Furthermore, not only was he told, but the entire industry was so informed through a series of stories in the tradepapers which named Hastings House of Philadelphia as the publisher.

It was on the basis of these printed stories that Mr. Wisberg tried to communicate with Mr. Haycox. When he did not hear from him, he reported his story to me and I included it in my article.

Therefore, it seems to me your quarrel is with whoever caused those inaccurate stories to be published and accepted as fact.

Meanwhile, I am happy to know that it is an "unfortunate impression" that Mr. Haycox would not share novel royalties with Mr. Wisberg if such were the case. May I thank him, through you, for thus making public his very fair stand?

MARTIN FIELD.

The following letter has been received from the Richard K. Polimer Agency:

I have read with interest an article in the December issue of "*The Screen Writer*" entitled "Read Em and Weep" by Martin Field, and I would like to correct one item in the story.

Mr. Field states that Metro produced a picture "Easy to Wed" remade from "Libeled Lady" an original screen play by Maurine Watkins, Howard Emmett Rogers and George Oppenheimer.

Some years ago I negotiated the sale of "Libeled Lady" to Metro, and it was an original story by Wallace Sullivan. When the picture was remade Metro refused to give Wallace Sullivan screen credit regardless of the fact that the new version was an exact replica of his original. Upon investigation the Guild found that there was nothing they could do to force such credit

RICHARD K. POLIMER.

(Editor's Note: SWG credit records show that the writing credits for *Libeled Lady* were: Screenplay by Maurine Watkins, Howard Emmet Rogers and George Oppenheimer. Based on a story by Wallace Sullivan. When the re-make was released under the title *Easy to Wed*, adaptation credit was given to Dorothy Kingsley. What Mr. Polimer says concerning the refusal to give Wallace Sullivan screen credit for the re-make of his original story is additional evidence of the need for a fundamental tightening of the rights of writers in the exploitation of their literary properties.)

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N E W S N O T E S

★ Current programs in the N. Y. Museum of Modern Art's History of the Motion Picture are: *Coming of Sound* (II): *Hallelujah*, Jan. 31, Feb. 1-2; *Coming of Sound* (III): *Anna Christie*, Feb. 3, 4, 5, 6; *Coming of Sound* (IV): *Morocco*, Feb. 7, 8, 9; *Screen Personalities* (III): *Susan Lenox*, *Her Fall and Rise*, Feb. 10,

11, 12, 13; *Coming of Sound* (V): *Trouble in Paradise*, Feb. 14, 15, 16; *The Social Film* (I): *I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang*, Feb. 17, 18, 19, 20; *American Film Comedy* (XII): *Mad Dog*, *Million Dollar Legs*, Feb. 21, 22, 23; *American Film Comedy* (XIII): *The Barber Shop*, *Duck Soup*, Feb. 24, 25, 26,

27; *The Social Film (II): Wild Boys of the Road*, Feb. 28, March 1, 2.

★ Sixteen classic Russian films dating from 1906 to the present are being presented in a series of twelve weekly showings which began Sunday, January 12th, at 8:00 P.M. at the Hollywood Studio Club, 1215 Lodi Place.

This will be the nineteenth series of motion picture showings from the New York Museum of Modern Art Film Library to be presented here, and is sponsored by American Gallery Films, with Dudley Nichols, screen writer and producer, and Fritz Lang, screen director and producer, as honorary chairmen.

Showings will include the works of Eisenstein, Pudovkin and other outstanding Russian film-makers, and will range from earliest newsreels, comedies and historical pictures to the modern Russian dramatic films.

Admission will be by membership subscription, at a cost of \$10 for the series. Reservations may be made at American Gallery Films, 6727½ Hollywood Blvd., or by calling HO-1064 from 6 to 10 P.M.

★ SWG member Cy Gomberg has just sold two series of stories—one to *Cosmopolitan*; the other to *Collier's*.

★ Martin Field, member of The Screen Writer editorial committee, contributed to the November issue a vivid eye-witness report of his observations while watching a studio entrance picket line. The article has been reprinted by the *Hollywood Press-Times* and the *CSU News*.

★ SWG member Milt Gross hit the book stands for the Christmas trade with his comedy story, *I Shoulda Ate the Eclair*. It is published by Ziff-Davis.

★ Samuel Fuller, who contributes *Joe*

Loved Everybody to this issue of *The Screen Writer*, is also contributing a new fiction thriller, *Obituary*, to the American reading public. The novel is being published by Duell, Sloan & Pearce.

★ The forum series, *Counter-attack—Against the Plot to Control America's Thinking* presented every other Monday night by the Hollywood Writers Mobilization at the El Patio Theatre is attracting community-wide and national attention. Three forums have been held, dealing with the attacks upon freedom of thought and freedom of expression in radio, motion pictures, the press and the schools. There are seven forums remaining for discussion including: *The Bookburners*, dealing with the Hearst censorship proposals; *You Can't Print That*, dealing with the suppression of the news; *You Can't Teach That, America's Iron Curtain*. Of special significance will be the forum entitled *The Writer Under Attack* in which several leading writers will discuss the problem of the freedom of the writer in America today.

★ Comment in D.D.T.'s column in Jan. 7 *Daily Variety*: "One of the best pieces of writing James M. Cain has turned out in a long time is his article on Vincent Lawrence, the late playwright and screen writer, in the January issue of *The Screen Writer*."

RE-SELLING STORY PROPERTIES

The *Screen Writer* is gathering factual data on such situations as Samuel Fuller describes in his article, *Joe Loved Everybody*, in this issue. Readers possessing information about story property re-sales in which writers have not shared in the profits are asked to send such data to *The Screen Writer*, 1655 N. Cherokee, Hollywood 28.

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NEXT MONTH AND THEREAFTER

MILT GROSS	•	THE FUNCTION OF FUNCTIONALISM
LEONARD SPIGELGASS	•	DAMON RUNYON
MARTIN FIELD	•	TWICE-SOLD TALES
JEAN BRY	•	FRENCH MOTION PICTURE SCHOOL
JOSEPH MANKIEWICZ	•	ART OF THE MOTION PICTURE
HERBERT MARGOLIS	•	UNESCO AND THE WRITER

And further articles by LOUIS ADAMIC, HUGO BUTLER, SHERIDAN GIBNEY, JAY RICHARD KENNEDY, ARTHUR KOBER, STEPHEN LONG-STREET, VLADIMIR POZNER, LOUISE ROUSSEAU, HAROLD J. SALEMSON, ARTHUR STRAWN, and others

— AND —

SPECIAL AAA SUPPLEMENT FOR MARCH

(SEE BACK COVER)

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Coming — Special Supplement on American Authors' Authority

Next month The Screen Writer will publish as a special supplement a complete survey of the AAA proposal and important new developments co-ordinating it with the licensing program already approved by the Authors' League.

This survey will include all modifications of the original AAA plan, proposed by-laws and articles of incorporation, a symposium of arguments against and a summary of arguments in favor of AAA, and a program of action to unify American writers in support of a working organization to improve and safeguard the economic position of writers.

This definitive outline of the American Authors' Authority, organized within the framework of the Authors League, is being prepared by the Overall AAA Committee of the Screen Writers Guild after an analysis of all the pro and con legal, moral, political and economic arguments elicited by the original AAA proposal during the last seven months.

It will be a document of direct personal and economic interest to every American writer. An effort will be made to reach every American writer with it.

**Watch for this Important Special AAA
Supplement of the Screen Writer
NEXT MONTH!**

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VOL. II, NO. 10 • MARCH, 1947 • 25 CENTS PER COPY (CANADA & FOREIGN 30 CENTS)

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THE FUNCTION OF THE FUNCTION •

DAMON RUNYON •

PACKAGE DEAL IN FILM OPINIONS •

THE CAMERA AS NARRATOR •

HOW TO AVOID WRITING •

Rouben Mamoulian

• Milt Gross

Leonard Spigelgass

• Robert Shaw

Harold J. Salemson

Louise Rousseau

Editorial •

Report and Comment by
Walter Reilly, R. S. and from the Chicago Times

Notes and Letters on Writing Credits and Awards

Correspondence • News Notes • Screen Credits

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the SCREEN WRITER

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MARCH, 1947

S T A G E A N D S C R E E N

ROUBEN MAMOULIAN

DIRECTING for the Stage or for the Screen is an exciting adventure. It means living many lives, lives of different characters in everchanging backgrounds and in various periods of history. These lives may be vicarious, but then is not imagination as potent and fruitful as reality? Directing also means giving a concrete, visible shape to ideas, feeling and conflicts which are of interest to humankind. At its best, it means creating new worlds which capture the breath and the essence of Life and mold them into the rhythmic, harmonious form of Art.

Whenever people ask me which I like better, directing for the Stage or for the Screen, they always expect me to prefer one medium to another. I love them both with equal fervor, not because they are similar, but because they are so different from each other. Each has its own charms, its own problems, and its own joys. They are like two

ROUBEN MAMOULIAN is the distinguished stage and screen director. This article will appear as a chapter in a forthcoming book edited by William Hawks, to be called *Their Magic Wands*. It will include chapters by various leading directors on their methods of working. Mr. Mamoulian was asked to contrast the creative problems of stage and screen, and to illustrate his own approach to the handling of each medium.

beautiful trees growing out of the same soil but bearing different fruit. One, the Screen, is an evergreen that can exist for years; the other, the Stage, sheds its leaves after each performance and dies when the play closes. But that very evanescence gives it an added quality of magic. They both represent the art of the Theatre. They spring from the basic human instinct for playing games, and neither can exist without an audience.

The Stage is an ancient art, and has centuries of history behind it, while the motion pictures were born within the memory of our present generation. Yet, there is a curious similarity in their development which is important for us to remember because it vividly points out the very essence of their arts. They were both born speechless.

The Drama, as we know, sprung from ancient Greek religious rites of Dionysius. Dancing and music were the substance of that early theatre. Dialogue didn't come into it until much later. Even so, silent motion pictures consisted of dramatic action, accompanied by music from the orchestra pit, and only recently acquired the power of speech. This is significant and interesting because it shows that spoken words were merely an addition to an already existing artistic form, the substance of which was visual movement.

Unless we keep remembering that both Stage and Screen could and did exist without words, we are apt to get off on a tangent that betrays the true nature of those mediums. Stage and Screen are basically the arts of telling a story through visual dramatic action, and the words, no matter how significant, are of secondary importance. This is the common ground of the two mediums which otherwise are completely different in their technique and final artistic achievement.

There is a persistent popular tendency, also shared by many professional critics, to treat the Stage and the Screen as similar arts, and to keep comparing them the way you would compare two apples, or the characters of twins. Yet, there is no more justification for this attitude than there would be in comparing sculpture with painting, or music with dancing. Stage and Screen are two separate arts, subject to different laws and entirely sufficient unto themselves.

The Stage is the art of collective acting by flesh and blood actors organized by the director. The audience witnesses the actual perform-

ance. There is a direct impact between the living actors and spectators, a definite physical relationship. The spectator sees the very process of a play spontaneously coming to life through acting. This performance only exists after the curtain goes up, and is no more when the curtain comes down.

Not so with the Screen. To the two elements of the theatre, which are: performance and audience, the Screen brings a third and most important element: the camera. It is this miraculous achievement of science which gave birth to a new and truly modern form of art. You could make motion pictures without a story, without scenery, without actors, but never without a camera. This instrument alone, used creatively, makes motion pictures possible. It is through the eye of the camera that the artistic form of a film story is conceived. That is the creative function of the lens. Its other function is to act as interpreter and guide to the audience. The eye of the camera becomes the eye of the audience. Thus, the camera combines within itself the creator and the ideal spectator.



In the legitimate theatre, the audience has a free choice of what it wants to see. They can focus their attention on any part of the stage, or on any one of the actors — naturally so, because at all times they see the performance as a whole. On the Screen, it is the camera which selects what should be seen, and the manner in which it should be seen. It presents to the spectator a continuous series of pictorial images of various compositions, all working to produce the desired mood and effect.

This succession of everchanging dramatic imagery is the very essence of film art. In my opinion, the Screen is more closely related to painting than to the art of the Stage. This was more obvious during the silent films but is no less true today. With the advent of color, this affinity has become even more complete. It is not for nothing that the people, with the unerring instinct of their vernacular, call the films "pictures" or "movies." Vox Populi — Vox Dei. When the sound and dialogue invaded the Screen and buried it under an avalanche of indiscriminate verbiage, the people called the films "talkies." Indeed for a

time, that is all they were. Visual imagery and dramatic action were sacrificed to the newly discovered noise. Yet, even before the Screen began to shake off the burden of extraneous sounds, and although talk remained on the Screen, the term "talkies" became obsolete. People reverted to saying "pictures" or "movies." Unconsciously, they know the basic truth, that the art of the Screen is the art of Pictures that Move.

A good film is one that a deaf man can enjoy. For him who cannot hear but who can see, a motion picture still lives, vitally and eloquently. But for a man who is blind and can only hear, a film does not exist. He might as well be listening to the radio.

So, to summarize, we might say that while Stage and Screen are both Theatre, the Stage is a dramatic art of coordinated acting by live actors, while the Screen is a pictorial art, dramatically organized, with the power of reproducing sound and speech.

It becomes automatically evident then, that acting on the Stage possesses different values from those of acting on the Screen. For the sake of clarity, I would like to mention that whenever we talk of collective acting, we mean acting controlled by the director, because obviously no undirected performance can be a work of art any more than a symphony concert, prepared and given by an orchestra without a conductor can be a work of art.

On the Stage, acting is the element of final importance. The greatest play will not be enjoyed by an audience if it is badly performed. On the other hand, many a play, poor and faulty as dramatic literature, is transformed into superb theatre by great acting. On the Screen, acting, though important, is only one of the many elements that go into the making of a film. The all-important factors, as I mentioned before, are the moving pictorial values, of which actors constitute only a part.

This explains, for instance, the seemingly strange fact that the most perfect films made in Hollywood use no live actors at all. I refer, of course, to Walt Disney's masterpieces, which are classics of film art. (The one picture in which Mr. Disney did use live actors I consider the poorest he ever made.) This also explains why excellent films can be made with animals, puppets and just objects. We don't completely realize that even in the most outstanding motion pictures performed by live actors, scene after scene is not only enriched and strengthened, but

frequently, completely told through the use of purely pictorial values: natural scenery, colors and dramatic arrangement of dead things — props.

How often a shadow on the wall, a closeup of a door-knob, an ash tray or a crashed bottle can be as effective as the best acting. I have seen an Eleanora Duse or a Chaliapin, surrounded by pitiful mediocrities and shabby production, lift the evening in the theatre into the realm of exciting, unforgettable experiences through the sheer magic of their individual performances. But I have never seen a bad film saved by one performer. Indeed, the Stage is the kingdom of the actors, the Screen, the kingdom of the pictures.

In the legitimate theatre, the audience sees a performance by living people. Although this performance has been previously rehearsed and organized by the director, it has to be brought to actual life every evening. Therefore, it is open to unexpected deviations, changes, or accidents. While the play is unfolding itself on the Stage, any kind of surprise is always possible. This plays no little part in adding zest to the audience's enjoyment of a Stage performance — they are watching the future becoming the present.



On the Screen, people see two-dimensional photographs, the final result of a creative effort which took place long ago, during the shooting of the picture. This result is crystallized and changeless. It can be kept in a tin can for years. So the audience sees the past becoming the present. (We all know that a glimpse of the past is never as intriguing as a glimpse of the future, which is the only reason why so many fortune tellers make a good living.)

This basic difference in the substance seen by the audience: living people in one case, photographs in the other, is responsible for a different perception of time and its value on the Stage as compared to the Screen.

One minute feels much longer on the Screen than it does on the Stage. In the theatre, you can play a sustained continuous scene for forty-five minutes, if necessary, without boring your audience. On a film, the same scene — and just as well acted — will put your audiences

to sleep after four or five minutes. Also, the visual background for action can remain the same on the Stage for the duration of one act and, frequently, of the whole play, while on the Screen, it would tire the eye and dull your interest within a few seconds.

This necessity for quicker changes on the Screen is taken care of by the extraordinary flexibility of the camera. The natural limitations of the Stage space and Stage scenery do not hamper motion pictures. Their scope is immeasurably wider, and is of an infinite variety. Everything, from the longest vista of prairies to a single blade of grass, or from a crowd of thousands to a minute part of a human face, can be captured by the camera eye. Telescopes of long shots and microscopes of closeups are at the disposal of the film spectator.

Also, on the Stage, you not only see all of the action all the time, but you see it from one definite and constant point of view which is that of the seat you happen to occupy in the auditorium. In films, the spectator has at his disposal a magic flying carpet, as comfortable as a loge seat. On this he flies up and down, from one side to another, through a rich selection of the most advantageous points of view and angles prearranged by the camera.

The above is responsible for a great difference in the quality of acting on the Stage as compared to the Screen.

In the legitimate theatre, the key for acting, for the actor's voice, and the whole projection of the play, is set by the last row of the gallery. The actors must be seen and heard from there. Because of that, mimicry, gestures and vocal tones have to be extended and intensified. When I begin rehearsing a play, I first work on the Stage. After a week, I periodically go back and sit in the last row of the auditorium. I remember once, during the rehearsals of *Wings Over Europe*, I sat in the back while an important scene was being played on the Stage. I stopped it and shouted to one of the actors who had a leading part: "I'm sorry, but I can't hear anything you're saying."

He shouted back: "What did you say?"

I repeated: "I can't hear a single word you're saying."

He said: "Oh, I see! How was it otherwise?"

There is no "otherwise" on the Stage. But there is on the Screen. The microphone can do with the actor's voice what the camera can do

with his face, enlarge it or make it smaller, reproduce it faithfully or distort it. This flexibility of the microphone makes certain audible effects possible on the Screen which could never be done on the Stage.

As an example, let me relate a little scene from *Applause* (my first picture, 1929). A young girl comes out of a convent and arrives in New York to join her mother, a fading burlesque queen, played by Helen Morgan. For the first time in her life she sees a performance of burlesque, up on 125th Street, in all its stark and sordid nakedness. Her mother is the chief performer, going through the ritual of a striptease act. This shocks and distresses the girl profoundly. Later the girl is in bed in her mother's dingy little hotel room. The mother comes to her, sits at the bedside and tries to sing her to sleep. Having spent her whole life in burlesque, the mother knows only the bawdy songs she does in her show — no lullabys have ever been a part of her repertoire. So she sings the song she knows — the same striptease one that she sang that evening in the theatre. But she sings it to her little girl the way one would sing a lullaby. While she is singing, I wanted the girl to take out her rosary from under the pillow and to whisper her nightly prayer. Now, on the Stage, or even in a room, in realistic circumstances, you could never hear this whispered prayer because of the much louder singing of the mother. The only way you could hear the whisper of the child would be by bringing your ear close to the lips of the girl on the pillow. Yet I wanted the audience to hear both the prayer and the song. The only way we could achieve this was by recording the two sounds through separate microphones on two separate sound channels. This was the first time that two channels were simultaneously used in recording. (Simple as it sounds today, at that time, it was quite a revolutionary departure.) We then increased the volume of the whisper, without changing the quality of it, to make it easily audible. In this way, an interesting counterpoint of two motives completely different in mood was achieved: a religious prayer going hand in hand with a burlesque song, both with their respective dramatic implications.

While a play on the Stage unfolds itself in a continuous long shot and must be seen and heard by the man who sits in the last row of the gallery, a motion picture is played mostly in medium shots and closeups. It is the closeup which is responsible for the much greater intimacy of a

film as compared to the Stageplay. A closeup brings the spectator face to face with the character on the Screen. So the actor in a film can use his face and voice with the complete and easy naturalness that goes with a *tete-a-tete* conversation. He needn't strain his voice to reach the last rows of an audience, the microphone does that for him.

On the Screen you can have a natural whisper with all its hushed effectiveness, which is indeed a different thing from the formidable hissing sound that only real acting experts could produce on the Stage under the name of "stage whisper." The technique of "stage whispering" has been pretty well discarded in the modern theatre, because it became too much of a strain, not only on the spectator's ear, but also on his credulity. The greatest experts of "stage whispering" in Europe were the prompters who developed it to heroic proportions. I remember many a time hearing the text of a play delivered twice, and with equal vehemence, first from the prompter's booth and then from the Stage (especially in repertory theatres where prompters were pretty much a necessity.)



The rehearsals of a play constitute a sustained four or five weeks' work, not to count additional improvements after the play opens. When the curtain goes up in front of an audience, the performance is unbroken and continuous except for two or three brief intermissions. On the other hand, the work on a picture and a Screen performance in the making consists of constant interruptions over a period of many weeks.

On the Stage, my final purpose is to create a sustained performance that will remain a substantial entity after the play opens and I, the director, am not there. Since the aim is for a more permanent value, it takes longer to accomplish it. That is why those weeks of rehearsing are necessary. They offer the opportunity to construct on a firm basic foundation. I build with the actors. If I don't immediately get just what I'm looking for, I can let it go, as merely a step in a gradual development, with a reasonable assurance that in the four or five weeks allowed, the desired effect will be finally achieved. The situation on the Screen is in direct contrast. One has no comparable period of preparation. When a

picture is being shot, the rehearsals are only of a few hours' duration at most. The film actor must perform his task immediately. For him there is no tomorrow — he does his scene now or never.

Let us take a dramatic, emotional scene as performed on the Stage and on the Screen. A Stage actor not only has had weeks of rehearsals, but he also has a whole act or two, during the performance itself, to "warm up" to that scene. A Screen actor has to hit it cold, so to speak, without emotional continuity. He has to acquire his acting past, which is the psychological foundation of any scene, instantaneously, or at best in a very short time. This shows that acting on the Screen has its peculiar difficulties. At the same time, while on the Stage the actor has to deliver a good performance night after night. On the Screen one, and only one, performance is enough. It is fixed indelibly on the celluloid and needs no repeating.



Over all, the Stage gives the actor greater opportunity and a more thorough satisfaction in his art. Also, over all, it is easier to act for the camera than it is to act on the Stage. This is mainly because the director and his many expert collaborators have more leeway in helping the actor or actress on the Screen. The average scene you shoot is of one or two minutes duration. It is easier to run fast for one block than for ten. The actor doesn't have to keep up a continuous performance for two or three hours, as he must on the Stage. You can rehearse every minute part of a Screen performance just before it is played. You can use every means at your command to create a mood, the proper atmosphere, and to influence the actor in such a way as to produce the result desired. Also, so much is done by the magic of the camera, the angles, the effective compositions, arrangements of props and shadows. With all these, you can get out of the same actor the illusion of a much better performance on the Screen than on the Stage.

Frequently, you have to resort to means that might rightly be called tricks to achieve certain effects. I remember a scene in "Queen Christina" which called on Greta Garbo to laugh out-loud with merriment. Miss Garbo, who is one of the finest and most sensitive actresses of the

Screen, told me it was no use to attempt this, because she was not able to laugh at will.

The scene was one in which Queen Christina, riding on horseback across the snowy hills of her kingdom, comes upon the carriage of the Spanish ambassador, which is hopelessly stuck in the snow. The ambassador, with three men of his retinue, all wrapped in enormous furs, are incompetently trying to push the carriage out of the icy hole. The queen, amused by the sight of pompous and overdressed Spaniards, puffing and struggling is supposed to break into peals of laughter.

We tried the scene several times — no laughter came. So I decided to shoot Miss Garbo's reaction in a closeup which did not include the Spaniards. I took aside John Gilbert, the ambassador, Akim Tamiroff, the valet, and the two other men and asked them to make the funniest and most grotesque faces at Queen Christina when she rides up to them. They rehearsed in front of me, and I knew that one would have to be made of extremely stern and humorless stuff not to laugh at the grimaces which that quartet achieved. Then I asked Miss Garbo to do the scene once more, and to keep on with it regardless of what happened. We turned the cameras. Miss Garbo rode into her closeup position, the Spaniards turned from the carriage to her and made their fantastic faces. Miss Garbo broke into a spontaneous cascade of laughter and, fine trouper that she is, carried on with the dialogue of the scene, which now is part of the film.

On the Screen, acting can also be greatly helped indirectly by adding to what the actor does pictorial and moving images which extend and enrich the emotions of the character. For example, to add to a feeling of new happiness and freedom won by Gary Cooper and Sylvia Sydney in *City Streets*, I used a song of a lark and a shot of white pigeons flying across the sunlit sky.

In *Applause*, the love scene between two kids, played on the top of a skyscraper, reached a higher climax because of a shot of an airplane which we made to "happen to fly" over them at the precise moment. In *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the feeling of gaiety and happiness to Dr. Jekyll was increased by shots of flickering flames, glittering crystals of the chandelier, and the dancing highlights of sunshine on a marble statue.

Spoiled by the comparative ease with which you can achieve these effects on the Screen, I once tried it on the Stage, in Oklahoma! I thought it would be a fine effect, expressive of the mood of the play, to open the first curtain on a sunlit stage of Lorrie's house, with its happy country backdrop, and before anything else happened, to see a flock of white pigeons fly across the Stage, then proceed with the opening song, which as most of you know by now, is Oh, What a Beautiful Morning.

The Theatre Guild got hold of a man who was an expert on pigeons. I described to him what I wanted, and he told me it could be accomplished with the greatest of ease. He would train eighteen pigeons to do just what I wanted, at fifteen dollars a pigeon. Because of my enthusiasm for the idea, the Guild was willing to pay the price which, in theatre terms, was as high as my enthusiasm.

Throughout the rehearsal period, I kept inquiring as to how the training of the pigeons was getting on, and the expert assured me that everything was fine. Finally, for the dress rehearsal in New Haven, a big crate arrived backstage and was placed on one side, in the wings, while on the other side, way up in the rafters, another crate was hung with pigeon food inside and the door open. The theory was that the pigeons would fly into this other crate to get their food. All my associates were curious to see the beautiful spectacle of nature itself cooperating with the actors behind the footlights. Personally, I don't think I've ever been as excited and impatient to see the first curtain go up at any other dress rehearsal.

Finally the great moment came. The sunny panorama of the Oklahoma farm was disclosed by the rising curtain. The conductor breathlessly held his baton in abeyance, awaiting the flight of the birds. The door of the pigeon-crate was opened by the expert (whom I never want to see again) and then — the unexpected happened. Instead of flying across the Stage, as they were trained to and paid for, the perverse birds flew straight up, like Roman candles, and landed on various scenic pipes on the top of the Stage. There they stayed, not only throughout the dress rehearsal but through the three days of our performing in New Haven, causing unexpected embarrassment to actors and no little white and fluffy damage to the scenery. Also, quite a few cowboys hats had

to be sent to the cleaners. Needless to say, we opened in Boston and in New York without the pigeons.

The advent of color on the Screen gave it an added dimension of tremendous power. Some people think that it brings the Screen closer to the legitimate theatre. I think it takes the Screen much further away from it and plants it right next door to painting.

The use of color on the Screen is more complicated and diversified than it is on the Stage. This is due to cutting and angles, which mean thousands of different compositions and images that make up a motion picture.



I was fortunate enough to have directed the first full feature in the new technicolor, *Becky Sharp*, in 1935. It had all the excitement and fascination that goes with pioneering, as well as the shortcomings that go with it too. I derived a much fuller satisfaction out of working with color later, on *Blood and Sand* in 1941, and at this present time, on Eugene O'Neill's *Ah, Wilderness*. In the years following *Becky Sharp*, I tried to learn as much as I could about color from a scientific and artistic point of view, and also to find out for myself what is the right approach to color on the Screen.

Color is not a neutral or insipid element. It is a great force. Any force can be either good or bad, depending on how it is used. A strong medicine heals you if you take it according to the doctor's prescription and kills you if you take an overdose. Even so with color on the Screen. It has to be carefully prescribed. Our approach to it must be mainly psychological. For us, the scientific or literary definitions of color, which you will find in Webster's, are not valid. We should define colors as emotions. From time immemorial, the human race has responded to it. There is hardly a person living in whom colors do not provoke varied and definite emotional reactions. Different shades and tints are to us warm or cold, exciting or soothing, aggressive or retiring, etc. Therefore, the selection of color on the Screen should be governed by its fitness to the emotional and psychological aspect of each scene. It must clearly reflect the characters and the moods which we are trying to project. The aes-

thetics of color will take care of themselves automatically, because they too are controlled by emotions.

The Screen, being predominantly a pictorial medium, and one of infinite fluidity and richness, allows more scope for visual beauty, imagination and poetry. Unfortunately, the films haven't yet begun to use their vast resources in that direction. The Stage, with its physical restrictions, its slower and steadier tempo, has a greater range for intellectual themes, which necessarily need more words and more time to develop.

While both mediums are basically emotional, let us make no mistake about that, the Stage is better qualified to handle complicated ideas and thoughts, while the Screen is superbly equipped to deal with action, and visual imagery of both everyday life and imaginative make-believe. Add to this the fact that a film, to be successful, must appeal to millions of a vast mass audience, while a play makes good even if it satisfies a comparatively limited and select group of thousands. We know that feelings can unite more people than can thoughts and intellectual premises.



The wide practice of transferring Stage plays, and especially good plays, to the Screen generally results (with few notable exceptions) in films that are inferior to their Stage counterparts. This happens because, while the intellectual texture of the play has been condensed and emaciated to presumably fit the celluloid, no added emotional or visual values have been brought into it to compensate for that loss. Also, a good play is good because it fits the footlights, because it has been specifically written to fulfill the requirements of the Stage. The better the play, the more difficult it is to do it justice on the Screen. The only way this has been done and can be done is by remembering that the Screen has its own language (not in the sense of dialogue, of course.)

One must have imagination and courage to translate or rather transform that play into film-terms. The result must be faithful to the author's conception, it must retain the truth of his story, his characters

and his words, yet at the same time relate all these in pictorial and emotional terms which are the Screen's own.

Right now I am engaged in the most difficult and fascinating task of my directorial career — that of a double adaptation, of a dramatic play to the Screen. It is the making of Eugene O'Neill's *Ah, Wilderness* into a film, and furthermore a musical film. Here, there is no question of cutting big hunks out of the play to make room for "song and dance" routines of the usual film musical — it would be an act of vandalism. A fine play like this must be either transformed into a new form, that glows with a beauty of its own, or else be respectfully left alone.

What we are trying to do with it is a new type of musical film, wherein no singing, dancing or music is used unless it adequately replaces pages of the play's dialogue and consistently advances the story. There is no room here for "numbers," "choruses" or "specialties." Singing must be interwoven and integrated with speech. Speech must range from everyday prose to rhythmic, cadenced sentences, and to rhyming verse written to music. Dancing must be a poetic and emotional extension of dramatic action. Also, wherever it is fitting, we treat the scenes in a freely imaginative manner, for which the color-camera is so naturally and so beautifully equipped.

Whether the results will be successful or not, I am profoundly convinced that in this method lies the future of the musical theatre of America. It is high time for the standard film-musicals to be put away in moth balls — they have become an anachronistic bore. If *Ah, Wilderness* fails, it will be an individual failure, and I will still believe in the principle which has guided its filmic structure.

I think the hope of both the Stage and the Screen lies in their divorce. The further they get away from each other, the purer and the more significant their achievements will be. Theirs are different roads. Nor need the legitimate theatre be afraid of competition. Motion pictures can never kill it, because there is no substitute for the presence of living actors on the Stage.

Reluctantly, one must admit that for the past several years, in spite of some few fine plays and films, both the dramatic Stage and the Screen have been in doldrums. The Stage has lacked authoritative writing, profound themes and vital ideas. The paucity of these has been equally

appalling on the Screen. The majority of pictures seem to avoid any kind of thought, like poison. Superficiality and smug prettiness fill the screens to the point of nausea. It is amazing that this staggering overabundance of trite, niggling stories and rubber-stamp execution is still bought by the audience. The Screen is feeding the nation and the world on intellectual and emotional popcorn and pink lemonade. The results of this diet cannot be brushed off lightly. Insidiously it corrodes the brain and shrinks the heart. It dulls our conscience and lulls it into stupor. The only remedy is the red meat of vigorous ideas, the grace of deep emotions and honest beauty. It is encouraging that the few films which have these are hungrily received by audiences. There should be more of them. There will be more.

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I think we are reaching the end of this period of spiritual and aesthetic decadence. The world cannot have gone through the cataclysm of the last war without now longing and reaching for the essentials in life and art. The dignity of man must be reasserted. Both the Stage and the Screen have been guilty of obsequiously following the footsteps of the ticket-buyers, and in their servile anxiety to please, have been catering to the least demanding palates.

The Public, like a person, has lower tastes and higher tastes. Let the Stage and the Screen start reaching for those higher tastes now. The Theatre has done enough following, it must begin to lead. I am certain the audience will not be far behind.

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THE FUNCTION OF THE FUNCTION

An Illustrated Essay

MILT GROSS

I GOT to thinking the other day, and I thought to myself, "Gross . . . you're getting older!" It came about like this. There was a magazine lying near the tub . . . (I was in the tub) . . . and on the cover of the magazine was the face of a very eminent man . . . a face I'd been seeing for many many years in magazines, periodicals, weeklies, . . . a fine face, with an impressive black beard and a thick black head of hair. And this time, when I looked at the picture, I suddenly noticed that the beard

was white, and the hair was white, and so I said to myself, "Gross," I said, "you're getting older!"

Being in the tub at the moment, I didn't have to look very far, either, for a verification of the fact. . . . I accepted it at once, and like all people in a tub, got to reflecting, and I reflected that the one thing in common, with which all of us make ready to shove off for



Terrible things can befall when
one starts thinking in the tub

a fate worse than life . . . the only one thing I'm sure that every mortal being, bum or banker, priest or panderer, is last conscious of on God's green earth, is a feeling of so much undone, so much unachieved, unfinished, unstarted.

SWG member MILT GROSS is the internationally distinguished cartoonist and newspaper, magazine and screen writer. His books include *Nize Baby and Dunt Esk* and the new best seller, *I Shoulda Ate the Eclair*.

And from that I got to asking myself, what, after all is the function of . . . and BOOM! . . . with the word 'function' I was down and out of the little cloud and into the middle of the very realistic present, because 'function' is a word that we seem to be hearing on all sides lately. . . . We hear lectures, read articles, listen to such questions on function as to the function of the Kumquat in the coming Nuclear Electronic world . . . the function of this, that, and the function of the other thing. . . .

Everybody today seems to be seeking a new function for everything, and nothing is functioning. . . . Go try buy a roll of tissue paper . . . or pick up a newspaper . . . I do twice a day . . . pick up a newspaper, that is . . . and what do I read day before yesterday? A new Mayor comes barging into office on a loud yelp:

"Crime is rampant! Law enforcement has broken down! I hereby warn the Police Department that all law-breakers, thieves, criminals, must be harassed, annoyed, and tormented, till they are driven out of town!"

This must have been quite a giggle even to the poor overworked Police Department. I could almost see two of them spotting a yegg about to swing a peter (crack a safe) in a Bank in the middle of the night on Main Street, and one says to the other,

"Let's annoy, harass, and torment him out of town!" The other says "Oke," and so they stand behind him, and the first cop opens a Crispy Crunchy Candy Bar, and begins chewing it and the second one says,

"Does it get you nervous if we watch, Mister?"



We must annoy the law-breakers

Already the crook is edgy from the godawful crackling of the cellophane, and the first cop says,

"What kind of drill do you use, Mister?"

"Put down that drill!" screams the yegg, his nerves taut, while the second cop is getting a hot-foot ready, and the first cop says,

"Like to see some snapshots of my kid? . . . Took 'em last Sunday up at Idlewild . . . Five years old, and he says the cutest things. . . . Why only last . . ."

By that time the poor yegg is half way across the State line, which now drops the whole thing into the lap of the FBI, and to get back to the function of the function, and to talking about me, I, myself, and nobody else . . . which most of us do anyway, I began to ask myself what is this new function of the artist . . . and how does it relate to or involve me, and I answered,

" . . . All I know is if the cash customers are laughing at what I'm writing or drawing, I'm functioning. If they're not laughing, then THEY'RE NOT functioning. Yuk, yuk!"

Ver-ee cute, ver-ee sly, very sharp, but really not very satisfying when one is having an honest argument with one's self in a bathroom mirror, and no stooges around to yell "Tooshay!" So I got to thinking, which can be a very dangerous thing for the inexperienced . . . much more terrifying things than mere physical mishaps, such as slipping on a soapy wash-cloth and cracking a pelvis, can befall one if one starts thinking in a tub.

However I said here I go, and I did get to thinking, and not without a feeling of virtuous satisfaction, and a sense of creative integrity, that in whatever I have done, I have always tried, in spite of a bluntness of my crayon, so to speak, or a verbal meagerness, I have always tried to 'say something,' to have an 'idea' or a thought that was basic, profound, fundamental . . . that would cause eyes to squint, heads to nod sagely, forefingers to start tapping the table significantly, like when some bar-room philosopher ups and hatches a great new world-shocking revelation, such as, "Squaw easy to get — hard to lose!"

Well I got feeling pretty good about all this and in so doing began to dwell upon a recent brain-wave of mine, a new and astounding theme for a great work (which would probably wind up as a four inch box in

Kartoon Kix) . . . based on the idea that there's only one thing in this world worse than being insane in a bug-house full of lunatics . . . and that is being completely sane in one.

I thought that was pretty sharp. . . . I liked it and got to playing with it, and the more I played with it, the more it seemed to me to have an old trite and familiar ring . . . even though I knew definitely that the idea had originated with me.

So I phoned a pal of mine . . . a smart one . . . and asked him if he'd ever run across that notion anywhere before. He immediately credited it to four Greeks . . . ancient . . . one modern, currently playing Loew's Pitkin, and also referred me to three solid pages in the Classified Phone Book, listing all the gag file proprietors.

This news was approximately like getting kicked in the short rib by a mule. I'd always thought of myself as an original thinker, and a great stimulator of thinking in others, creating bright nuggets of wisdom, on which I'd taken bows in every bar in the Village . . . and during which bow-taking it now suddenly dawned on me that I'd been pony-ing up for all the gin.



They were tapping the table in tribute to my pearls of wisdom — and I was buying the gin

It was like one's house of cards suddenly crashing about one's ears, only instead of ears it was eyes, and all I could see on the cards was not Kings, Queens or Aces, but trite, corny, tired, typed out jokes. On top of that came a new and even more alarming question. I asked myself, honestly pal, are you up there in that tree considering only the wreaking of 'great' and 'lofty' things solely because you're really afraid to tackle and take your chances with the 'down to earth' 'everyday' kind of writing and drawing.

I couldn't help thinking of one of my stories, involving a pet

character of mine. . . . A looney dog, endowed with no canine traits whatsoever, but with every unredeeming human one. . . . In this story he falls madly, ecstatically, in love with an iron dog on a lawn. . . .



He feels immediately that being so smitten he takes his place with the immortalized few of legend and mythology . . . exalted far above the sordid touch and go of everyday dogdom.

But we know, and so does he down deep in his heart, that any play he makes for a real live lady pooch . . . which he'd give a hind leg to consummate . . . would net him

Down deep in his heart he knows he's a jerk

solely a clawed up snoot, and perhaps an incidental shower of slops from some lady on a back porch . . . a further indignity because in his own pixie world he somehow chooses to identify himself with the human race rather than the animal kingdom.

So he wafts himself up onto a fantasy cloud of an idyllic, poetic, spiritual communion with ninety-eight pounds of cast iron, and thereafter sneers at the whole universe, four-legged, two-legged, centipede, alar, and finned.

At this point I began to feel myself sprouting two forelegs and a tail . . . a terrible repercussion. . . . I mean that's what I had in mind when I said that worse things than mere physical mishaps can befall one if one starts thinking in a tub.

A fellow casually asks himself, half-smiling in smug anticipation of getting a good high mark, "Well, pal, where do you fit into the scheme of things generally . . . how do you stand in today's set-up?," and the answer turns out to be "Like a guy with two broken legs!" Yi!

There are four things one can do at a point like this. Get stiff. See a psychologist. Start painting a landscape. Retire. All very fine and

notable procedures, but not for the present moment. So I said to myself,

"Gross, let's not be too hasty about all this. So suppose everything you've done has been said, done, sung, painted, sculpted, acted, fifty million times before, and just as many times more cleverly, deftly and artistically. Don't be any quicker to call yourself a completely ineffectual frustrated failure now, than you were to call yourself an inspired Messiah twenty minutes ago. There are very few of either in this world, and the only guy that ever was both came to a horrible end . . . Adolph Hitler.

And therein may lie the answer to some of the vague questions that must have been percolating back somewhere between your thalamus and the spot where you keep trimming your hair with the Missus' shears. Namely how may the creative individual better function in a world today that admittedly is in dire need of real creative constructive function of all sorts.

Well, as you discovered a few minutes ago, rather late in life, it's all been said before. . . . But has it all, the good, the healthy, the ideal, been heeded, assimilated, and lived by as yet? . . . In this connection I've frequently observed that people remark . . . and with some odd sense of pride that I've never quite been able to figure out:

"Do you know that the sayings of Confucious, Socrates, Shakespeare, and George W. Tranifatts, are just as applicable, fresh, and pertinent today as they were thousands of years ago!"

Well, in my book, that means only one thing. That the world is exactly where it was thousands of years ago. "Man, know thyself!," they keep repeating. Man **does** know himself. He has known himself far longer and better than he'll admit. He just refuses to acknowledge the acquaintanceship, and therefore dreams up sixty new ways a minute of saying "Man know thyself" . . . and contents himself with that. In this regard I seem to see mankind as two individual selves. A priggish, pompous, hypocritical, mincing little pretender, and a big, fat, greasy, lusty, healthy bum, who keeps popping up out of manholes, and embarrassing him with a "hi chum!" at the most inopportune moments. Neither individual is ideal, but if the former would not be so mortally fearful of the relationship with the latter, and fraternize a little with him, it would be of inestimable benefit to both. And mankind really knowing himself a little better, would fear himself a little less. If he ceases to fear him-

self a little he can begin to like himself a bit . . . and once he begins to like himself and give himself a break he will be on the way to catching up ethically and spiritually to where he has progressed technically . . . and once mankind can do that . . . Well, it has just occurred to me that

if we're seeking to determine how may the creative individual function today let us ask:

Is the work of the writer or artist finished when he has merely 'said' it, or only when what he has 'said' has taken root . . . and how are you going to tell anyway?

My answer is that we'll know it the day when all the great minds — Socrates, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Tolstoy, Dickens — become thoroughly outmoded, anti-



The day the philosophers become outmoded, it'll be a good thing

quated, interesting only as museum pieces of superb and useful artistry of their times . . . and the day that does take place it'll be a hell of a good thing . . . we'll really be on our way.

All this of course will take a bit of bringing about, and if we have nothing to do for the next couple of weeks . . . there it is . . .

With this thought I got out of the tub, dried, shaved, dressed, and off on a gander up Beverly Drive, with a firm resolve to get into the tub again one day soon.

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D A M O N R U N Y O N

LEONARD SPIGELGASS

I FIRST met him at Lindy's. That figured. Leonard Lyons arranged it. (Thanks). Said Damon might be interested in me to do the two stories he'd sold to Universal. Told me to be at Lindy's at twelve, and he'd be there with Damon. He was — with Damon, and Mrs. Runyon, and the Spitzes, and one of the Goldstein brothers, I think Bob, and Chuck Green, and a lot of other people, all of them sitting in the corner on the right as you come in. I was embarrassed, and ill at ease, and Damon didn't help any. The dialogue was fast, special, and a little out of my line. I felt I didn't have a chance for the job; and I didn't even think I particularly wanted it. I'm sure he didn't particularly want me either. But we agreed to meet the next afternoon at his apartment at the Parc Vendome.

I waited about half an hour while Damon finished his column, my heels and ears being chewed at by three of the most badly behaved cocker spaniels on record, and then I went into Damon's study, surprised to see that it was Louis XVI, and very formal, when I'd expected a cluttered desk, and pictures of Jack Dempsey and Joe Louis. We started off badly. Damon didn't like any of my ideas on Tight Shoes; I didn't like any of his. He felt that great pictures had been made out of Little Miss Marker and Lady For A Day, but he felt that the picture I had produced, (sic!) Princess O'Hara, was lousy. He was right. It was.

I kept sizing him up, those chilly eyes, and that florid complexion, the loud Glen Urquhart plaid suit, and the lavish Charvet tie, the gold

LEONARD SPIGELGASS, screen writer and former studio story editor, contributed a notable article, Kiska Journal, to the June, 1946, issue of THE SCREEN WRITER.

cigarette case, and his cold and incisive voice. The whole thing was not auspicious, until suddenly we got on Butch Minds The Baby, and it began to work, and he started a train of thought, and I supplied a top-per, and then he topped that, and then I topped him, and then, brother, he topped me, and, before we knew it, we were friends.

I don't know how long ago that was — seven or eight years maybe. But in all that time we've been friends, and I've been on the receiving end. Let me say this right off the bat, and get it over with: Damon Runyon was one of the greatest, sweetest, most intelligent men that ever lived. And if that's sentimental, then it's sentimental.



I remember once, after we'd written a treatment of Little Pinks in New York (it became Big Street) we were returning to R.K.O. at the Coast. Damon hadn't been in Hollywood for a long time. He didn't think he was going to like it. (As a matter of fact, when he finally did come, he didn't go back for two years.) We left on the Century, and got to Chicago the following morning. We were met by every sports writer, jockey, prize fighter (champion and broken-down), baseball player, and wise guy in town. They had a gala luncheon for him at the Blackstone and I saw happen there what I'd seen in Lindy's, and at the Yankee Stadium, and in travelling crap games, and in little candy stores where bookies hung out, and at opening nights, and in Washington — the same thing all over again: the adoration of the men and women who looked upon Damon as their best friend, who respected him, told him their secrets openly without equivocation, knowing that their confidences were safe with him. I guess Damon knew more dirt than any man living, and I guess Damon told less.

Anyway, we left Chicago, and his friends loaded the dining car with wild geese, and wild turkey, and pate, and caviar. And all the way across, whenever we stopped, even at little places like Lamie, New Mexico, guys got on, jockeys who were retired, or ball players who were tubercular, or just characters on the lam, and they looked at him with love, and he looked right back at them with tender eyes and deep under-

standing. He never condoned crime, understand; he just understood why guys were driven to it.

Literally, he understood more about people than anybody I ever knew. That's why I think he's one of the greatest short story writers America's ever had. O. Henry, Runyon, Lardner — that's my tally on it. There's no sense my talking about him as a newspaper man. I only knew him in fiction. Because he knew people, and because he was one of the most natural story tellers that God has ever created, he wrote like a demon. I never saw anybody in my life turn out a short story so fast. I never saw anybody so facile at making up plots. Actually, he wasn't making them up at all; he was remodeling things and people he knew, and rearranging them, in better order.

That's why he loved the movies. I think he saw every picture ever made. When we worked together in New York, we used to have dinner at the old Lindy's (Clara's) and go to a projection room, and see two pictures, and then go to the new Lindy's (Leo's) and talk about the two pictures. He had a canny eye for entertainment, but he hated what he called "message pictures" with a terrible and vindictive hate. He belonged to the die-hard school who said that movies were for fun and jokes and tears; he ruthlessly and systematically tore apart anybody who tried to use them for propaganda. Maybe he was right. Maybe he was wrong. Anyway that's the way he felt. I'm just reporting it.

He thought screenwriting was one of the hardest jobs in the world, said he could never do it. He never did, either. Best I ever got out of him were occasional lines of dialogue. The rest, I assure you, I stole hook, line and sinker from his stories. He used to wonder how I could imitate him so well. I wasn't imitating him at all; I was stealing his own sentence structure and phrases right and left. He used to say, and I wish he'd written it down, that screenwriting was a special kind of job; it required being a novelist, a playwright, and a civil engineer. Maybe it's because he was a writer himself, but he believed that the story was the most important part of the film, but that you **could** make a good screenplay out of a bad story. The man said so himself.

He also said a lot of other things that have become part of our language. I once asked him how he made up his words and why, and he explained. He felt that English, unlike Yiddish or even French, had

no vocabulary for marginal emotions, or marginal characters. For instance, what word is there in English to describe a faded blonde of forty-five trying to be young and not succeeding? Well, since this lady practically always wore a kimono and her hair always looked like a mop, it was easy enough for Damon to decide to call her a "komoppo."



He used to borrow liberally from Yiddish (as a matter of fact, his taste in food began with tomato herring and ended with cheese cake); and from Italian (he once supplied for Butch Minds The Baby the astonishing fact that goats are not allowed on the Island of Manhattan and that Italians are always breaking the law over Easter in order properly to observe the holidays); from gamblers (he once took me on a tour of a travelling crap game that started in the garment district and ended in the Bronx); from prize fighters (we used to go up to a gym and case the stables for hours); from baseball players (we climbed to the temporary press box at the top of Ebbetts Field to cover the world series); from dignitaries (we once spent an evening at the Stork Club with Supreme Court Justice Douglas); from Chuck Green (who is always ordering a "stunning cup of coffee"); from Acey Deucy, from Phil the Weeper, and Butch Towers, and from everybody he met, from everything he saw or heard.

His eyes were always open, his ears were always alert, his senses were always sharp. He became the instrument whereby the core of Broadway was articulated and brought to life. He sat in Lindy's, never in judgment but always in dignity.

Working with him was like a shot in the arm. I suppose I'm the only screenwriter in the world who would get up from his typewriter, go to a restaurant, and be introduced to all his characters personally. The picture we made he liked the most was Big Street. It had a curious ending. He loved it. When he couldn't talk any more last year, he wrote me a note, saying so. And, because he did, you get it:

Little Pinks, the busboy, loves a crippled but vicious chorus girl, and pushes her wheelchair to Florida. By Runyonesque machinations he

gives her a great Ball and she dies in his arms. As he carries her off, his two friends, Horse Thief and Professor B. discuss it:

TWO SHOT — PROFESSOR B. AND HORSETHIEF

Their eyes are quite wet.

HORSETHIEF

I would like to say as follows: this is pretty silly.

PROFESSOR B.

No, Pinks found what everybody else in the world is looking for.

HORSETHIEF

And lost it.

PROFESSOR B.

It is well known to one and all on Broadway that a citizen never loses what he's got filed away in his ticker.

FADE OUT

THE END

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A FILM PULITZER PRIZE FOR 1948?

Richard G. Hubler of the editorial committee of THE SCREEN WRITER published in the January issue an effective argument for the creation of a Pulitzer Prize for motion pictures.

The article at once attracted national attention. It was reprinted in part by Virginia Wright in her Los Angeles Daily News drama column. It was extensively quoted in the Times, Herald-Tribune and other N. Y. papers. Daily Variety gave it page one attention, and weekly Variety quoted the Hubler piece at length.

Now Dean Carl Ackerman of the Pulitzer School of Journalism at Columbia University says the Hubler proposal will be presented to the Pulitzer advisory body at its April meeting, and if approved Pulitzer motion picture awards will be made in May, 1948.

Says Weekly Variety of Jan. 22: "Strongest argument for a Pulitzer film prize was made in THE SCREEN WRITER, monthly mag of the Screen Writers Guild."

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PACKAGE DEAL IN FILM OPINIONS

ROBERT SHAW

YOU enter Dr. George Gallup's Profile Preview theatre a little tentatively, with vague misgivings about mental vivisection. But you look around and see that it is no chamber of horrors. It is just a projection room on the General Service lot, larger and not less stark than usual. You glance with interest at the other guinea pigs scientifically pre-selected for this audience reaction test. There are about one hundred of them.

Here is the average American film audience, as determined by Dr. Gallup's Audience Research, Inc. Each of these persons whose reactions are about to be psychologically charted represents approximately 560,000 Americans who plunk down their coin each week at motion picture box offices.

As you look at this replica in miniature of the movie masses, you remember what Dr. Gallup had said a night or so before when he met informally at a buffet supper affair with a group from the Screen Writers' Guild. . . . "The average American movie audience is predominantly a young audience. The 19-year-olds contribute more to the box office than any other age group. Regular movie attendance seems to begin around the age of 12. It goes up steadily through the age of 19. After that it falls off sharply. Relatively few persons attend the movies with any regularity after the age of 35. . . . Oddly enough, it may interest

ROBERT SHAW is director of publications of The Screen Writers' Guild. He is a contributor to various magazines, including *Public Opinion Quarterly* published by the Princeton University Press as a survey of the public opinion field.

you to know that my studies of the book business indicate that most of the people who read books are under the age of 35."

This Profile Preview audience illustrates Dr. Gallup's verbal graph. You see only a few representatives of the middle-aged or elderly population groups. This is a young audience. Vivacious, gum-chewing bobby-soxers seem to dominate it. They are about to sit in judgment on an unreleased picture on which thought, talent, craftsmanship, energy, hope and money have been expended in varying amounts. Their collective reactions to each scene will be recorded electrically on a psychic cardiograph, and the resulting chart will be studied in the studio front office and publicity department with the solemnity accorded by brokers to the graphs of the weekly market averages.

This audience of the scientifically controlled Profile Preview has not only been pre-selected to represent as nearly as possible a cross-section of the average film audience. Each member also submits to a questionnaire, giving individual vital statistics concerning age, sex, occupation, etc., and information designed to indicate at least sketchily one's critical level, tastes in pictures and the degree of anticipation aroused in you by the title, star, supporting cast and theme of the picture you are about to see.



All this is accomplished with a light and somewhat folksy touch, obviously meant to put you and 99 others at ease and remove any strain you may feel from serving as a test guinea pig for 560,000 weekly film-goers. (This figure is 1/100th of the 56,000,000 which is the Gallup count of the weekly American film audience. The Johnston office persistently places this weekly audience at 84,000,000. The Johnston office, when checked, said the figure was obtained from the Department of Commerce; the Department of Commerce, when checked, said the figure was obtained from the Johnston office.)

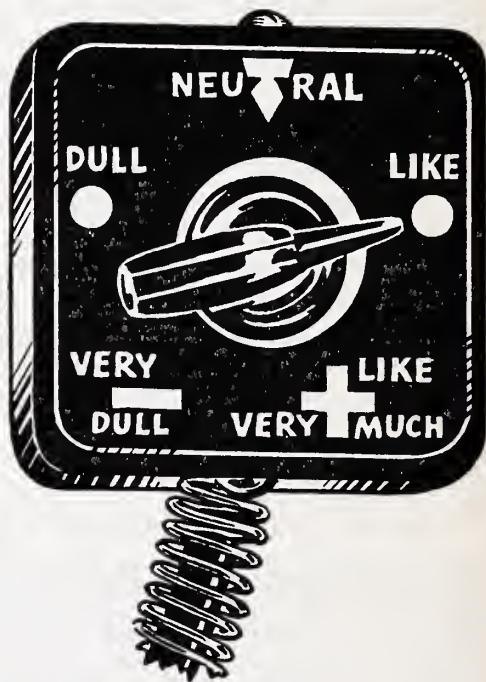
The picture you are about to see is *The Macomber Affair*, based on Ernest Hemingway's story, *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*, and with the screenplay written by Casey Robinson and Seymour Bennett. With Gregory Peck, Joan Bennett and Robert Preston starring, you

have an idea that the anticipation or "want to see" rate should be pretty high.

Before the picture starts each customer is equipped with Dr. Gallup's special audience reaction indicator. This little gimmick is about the size of an old-fashioned pocket watch, only somewhat square in shape. On the dial five positions are marked — Neutral, Like, Like Very Much, Very Dull and Dull. (See illustration). These positions and the pointer which indicates them are luminous, easily seen in the dark.

As the picture starts, each reaction indicator is set at neutral. After that, you can record your running reaction to what happens on the screen, whether you like it very much or find it very dull. The collective reactions of all the dials are fed automatically and continuously into a Rube Goldberg contrivance in the rear of the projection room. This machine, which utilizes in part the principle of the Geiger counter for measuring radioactivity, electrically measures and averages the sum total of the audience response impulses and records the result on a chart. Each scene of the film is carefully cued on the chart to correspond with the graph being made by the pooled messages of the reaction indicators.

The completed chart is about 50 inches long. It lists 200 or more scene cues to key the dips and rises of the fateful line. This line recording the mechanically averaged responses of the mathematically selected cross-section average of American audiences is studied in the front



Audience reaction indicator used at ARI
Profile Reviews

office of the studio producing the picture. If the line dips frequently below the neutral mark, indicating boredom, there is presumable despair in the heart of the producer. If the line barely manages to stay above the median neutral position for long periods, indicating only a lukewarm interest, the picture is very apt to get the brush-off in the releasing and publicity plans. But if the line stays well up above neutral, if its jagged profile indicates sharp interest responses, if it rises to indicate frequent weenies and soars occasionally into a big weenie, and especially if it ends on a rousing upswing that promises to send the customers out of the theatre talking to themselves and others about the picture — if this happens, then happiness presumably reigns supreme in the producers' hearts. They assume they have a hit on their hands, and they take it as a signal for increased advertising appropriations, and a slow first-run payoff in order that word-of-mouth publicity may operate to the fullest extent in the all-important first-run engagement.

Of course the actual chart is confidential until some time after the picture is released. But the average and somewhat incredibly young audience tested in the Profile Preview of *The Macomber Affair* seems on the apathetic side. It is an adult picture, with only a little flabby Breen office hokum at the end. You leave the projection room with a troubled feeling that Dr. Gallup's patented Profile Preview System, with its jury weighted on the juvenile side, is honest and accurate enough according to its lights, but that it is not the way to encourage more adult and intelligent screen entertainment. You see a little more clearly some of the reasons behind Dr. Gallup's statement at the SWG meeting that relatively few persons past the age of 35 show up regularly at the motion picture box office.



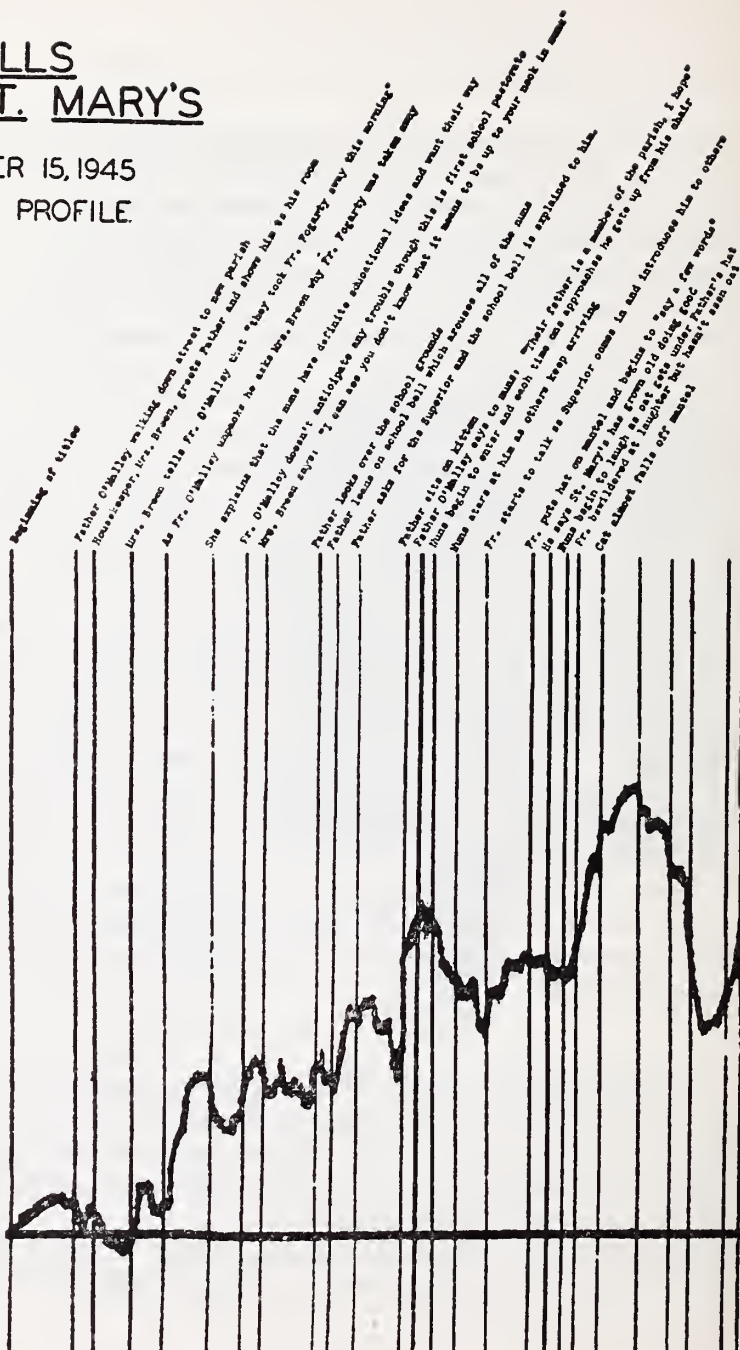
At the Screen Writers' Guild-Audience Research, Inc. meeting, arranged by the Guild Special Program Committee under the chairmanship of Howard Estabrook, Dr. Gallup discussed his techniques of research in the film audience field and answered questions asked by more or less cynical screen writers.

The mechanized audience reaction preview seems to be the substantial heart of the Gallup motion picture research system. But ARI,

THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S

NOVEMBER 15, 1945
PREVIEW PROFILE.

NEUTRAL



Small section of graph registering combined audience reaction to first few scenes in Profile Review of Bells of St. Mary's. Note how the line dips slightly below the neutral position in first minute or so and then rises as film begins to interest the audience.

which pretty much dominates its field, also performs other services. It makes pre-release story, idea and title tests. It does a quarterly audit of marquee values testing the box office magnetism of star names. It offers a picture selling analysis as a guide to advertising and publicity. It measures the size and character of the potential weekly audience. Dr. Gallup described briefly his methods of research, emphasizing the scientific basis of his film opinion package deal. He was introduced by N. Peter Rathvon, president of RKO, who said his studio used the Gallup ARI service principally as a guide to picture publicity budgets and to the type of exploitation best suited to individual pictures.

Dr. Gallup said he began his experiments in motion picture research 12 years ago, and has spent more than half a million dollars in developing his techniques of the scientific sampling of public opinion in the film field. He has an easy-going, rather disarming faith in the accuracy and value of his methods — a faith that did not seem to be altogether shared by some who heard and questioned him.

He gave some interesting factual information. He told how his research polls have disproved the industry theory that more women than men attend motion picture shows. He stressed the essential youthfulness of the American movie audience. He described the application of audience research techniques to the book publishing business, and the general ignorance concerning authors' names on the part of the mass buyers of cheap reprints.

Pre-production story tests stirred special interest. Of them Dr. Gallup said:

"When we make story tests, what we are doing is measuring the public interest in subject matter. We do not test plot. We test whether people would like to see a picture on this subject. We give them about a 60 word description, what we call a control story. . . .

"Good treatment can always overcome a dull subject. A good writer can still make it good. But if he had good subject matter, he would write a better story. We don't tell a studio to do this or that; we simply say we have put this question to a sample cross-section of movie-goers and that this is the reaction. . . .

"Our reports rate 'audience reception value' — that is, report the proportion of those who like the story idea and those who do not. Always the likes and dislikes are in proportion to the amount of money each group normally spends at the box office, by age, by sex, by income group, etc. They reveal the elements of strength and weakness in the

story idea. Since ARI has tested hundreds of themes or story ideas which have later become 'played off' pictures, we have been able to establish average interest levels for story ideas.

"ARI cannot tell a producer whether or not a story is worth \$20,000, \$100,000 or \$500,000, but ARI can point out that this story starts with initial interest equal to, greater than or less than other properties which were sold for \$20,000, \$100,000 or \$500,000."

Dr. Gallup and his chief assistant in the Hollywood ARI office, Jack Sayers, were asked for samples of the brief descriptions presented to the public as tests for story ideas. No samples were available at the meeting, but they have submitted these samples to THE SCREEN WRITER.

THE DARK MIRROR. When a wealthy society doctor is murdered, the police know a beautiful girl, easily identified, murdered him. But when the girl turns out to have an identical twin sister, the police don't know which one is guilty and which to arrest. A young doctor analyzes their personalities, falls in love with one and discovers which is the murderess.

CORNERED. Fresh from the war, Pete goes on a man-hunt to avenge his brother's death. The trail leads to Mocha Joe's West Indies Cabaret. Injuries have changed Joe's features but Pete recognizes him as the murderer. Cunningly he plays cat-and-mouse with his dangerous enemy. Then Pete falls in love with Joe's beautiful, unhappy wife, and

Dr. Gallup explained that these brief descriptions are prepared by a staff of writers at Princeton who are specialists in synopsisizing. But these microscopic outlines may seem a little inadequate as a basis for any sound, considered judgment concerning story values. One wonders, for instance, how such a film as Brief Encounter would have fared if it had been submitted to Dr. Gallup's average audience cross-section for this kind of a pre-judgment:

An unglamorous housewife living in the suburbs of London meets by chance a middle-aged doctor while she is on a shopping trip to the city. They are attracted to each other. They arrange to meet again, and they innocently enjoy talking, lunching and seeing movies together. Falling deeply in love, she agrees to a night rendezvous. When a coincidence prevents its consummation, he leaves for Africa and she returns to her dull and very decent husband.

A thumbs down audience reaction to that story idea would seem to be a cinch, since the evanescent beauty and tenderness of a great film cannot be captured in 60 or 60,000 words.

Here are some questions and answers developed at the SWG-ARI meeting:

- Q. Don't these story synopses get a snap judgment like a headline in a newspaper? Are you basing your judgment on a snap judgment of a snap judgment and calling it reliable?
- A. (Dr. Gallup) Our tests are not actually story synopses. They are a description of what the picture is about. The validity of the test is that people, when they go into a theatre, don't know what the picture is about. All they know is what has been told them in the advertising.
- A. (Mr. Rathvon) We don't use these story synopses or descriptions in deciding whether to go ahead. We use them simply to determine how to slant the advertising. In the case of Notorious, tests indicated there was a low story interest. Hitchcock's name and the stars were the selling points. We told as little in advertising about the story as possible.
- Q. Have you done any research on the types of stories which are liked best — that is, stories about families, crimes, westerns, mysteries? etc.?
- A. (Dr. Gallup) There we have confessed total failures. We have tried repeatedly, but we soon discovered that it was not the type that was important, but the story itself. We have to deal with a specific story.
- Q. One constantly in the studios runs into certain story subjects which are considered verboten. For instance, now nobody is interested in a war story. Prize fight stories are not possible. Circus stories are not likely to be possible. Stories about Hollywood are frowned upon. Are there any types of stories which you have found generally to be disliked? If not, would you put in black and white that there is no specific type of story that people do not like?
- A. (Dr. Gallup) As I have said, we attempt constantly to determine whether there is interest in a specific type of story, but we have found repeatedly that it is the particular story rather than the type which determines interest. For instance, on war stories, the greatest change has been only about 15 per cent; that is, at the present time, there is only about 15 per cent less interest in war stories than there was at the height of the war, which is a smaller drop than we expected.
- Q. How is your story test performed; how many people are employed; what organization performs the tests, who are the people sampled, and how is it done?
- A. (Dr. Gallup) We have a staff of between 90 and 100 people at Princeton University in an organization separate from the Institute of Public Opinion. We have a field organization of approximately 500 interviewers located in different areas of varying types. They are located in areas in such a way that we get an actual and accurate cross-section. For example, 12 per cent of all motion picture admissions come from the City of New York. We have the

whole country broken up in the same way. Seventeen per cent of the total box office comes from an area consisting of the west coast as far east as Denver. The interviewers are located in each area of the country in smaller cities, in towns, in larger cities, in such a way as to reflect accurately the actual distribution of the box office for the whole country. This staff interviews on any question a cross-section, that is, a certain percentage who attend movies several times a week, once a week, etc., down to those who attend once a year. This problem of getting an accurate cross-section and keeping it up to date is our toughest research problem.

Q. At what point does the story become important? Is the story important in pre-selling or after release and in word of mouth advertising?

A. (Mr. Sayers) In some cases the story is the selling point, in others not.

At this point a writer, Mr. Wells Root, offered a speculation concerning why the story testing method could not be turned around and used for the advantage and interest of writers. He pointed out that he had had an urge to write a certain kind of story and was authoritatively informed that there would be no interest in stories of this kind. Now precisely that kind of a story had become a candidate for an Academy Award.

Other interesting bits of information developed concerning public movie attitudes. Dr. Gallup brought out that adverse criticism does not hurt a picture's box office gross; that censorship publicity, as in the case of *Scarlet Street* and *Duel in the Sun*, is a box office boon; that a good title can add at least \$300,000 to the gross of a picture.

Mr. Sayers analyzed interestingly the results of audience reaction tests of *Going My Way*, *The Dark Mirror* and *the Jolson Story*. He listed four important features emphasized in testing a film: Title, Cast, Story, Treatment. Charles Brackett pointed out that the story element was highly important. Mr. Sayers observed that sometimes a picture may have only two exploitable features, and still be a success. The SWG audience opined, audibly, that he must mean *The Outlaw*.



In judging these techniques of audience reaction, one must remember the rather narrow limitations within which they operate, and the perfunctory and volatile attitudes they reflect. Their controls are undoubtedly as scientific as Dr. Gallup and his bright young men can

make them with the resources and knowledge at their disposal. Their motivation is a cynically frank commercialism. An ARI statement reads: "ARI is not interested in what people think they want to see on the screen or what they think their neighbor ought to see. ARI's interest is solely in measuring the ticket selling power of movies among moviegoers."

Dr. Franklin Fearing, the distinguished University of California professor of psychology who has observed and studied public attitudes tests, comments.

"I do not think we should assume a completely negative attitude toward the value of audience reaction research. It is true that the objectives as currently stated are crassly commercial, and the results used with little understanding of the limitations of the method. Nevertheless, scientific studies of mass audience reactions if intelligently interpreted may be of the greatest significance even to the creative worker in the mass media. These techniques and results need not necessarily be used as a brake on new ideas. On the contrary, such studies might furnish insights which could be obtained in no other way. As presently used these studies tend to freeze film production in the mold of the juvenile mind, and to furnish a pseudo scientific rationalization for those who fear new ideas. But it must not be forgotten that the film is a medium of mass **communication**. Effective communication must take into account the mental makeup of those to whom it is directed. Let's not throw out the baby with the bath."

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BUDD SCHULBERG ON SWG AND THE SCREEN WRITER

In the February issue of Holiday magazine Budd Schulberg publishes a comprehensive article on California culture — a definitive study of the seven arts 'mid sun, surf and big names, as the subtitle puts it.

A half page color illustration shows the SWG executive board in session.

In charting the rise of the California intelligence level Mr. Schulberg discusses the achievements of many individual SWG

members, and says: "Another indication of Hollywood's slowly (though still too slowly for some) coming of age is the new monthly publication, **THE SCREEN WRITER**. . . . Begun as a house organ supposedly devoted to problems of craftsmanship and working conditions, this magazine has broadened its scope to include cultural articles which have been translated into Czech, French and other languages."

THE CAMERA AS NARRATOR—TECHNIQUE OR TOY

HAROLD J. SALEMSON

FOR his first flight as a director, Robert Montgomery has attempted what most aspiring directors, producers, writers, or merely imaginative film lovers have dreamed of: a story told entirely in the first person, through the eyes of the main protagonist, rather than in the conventional third person. The motion picture is *Lady in the Lake*, a Steve Fisher screenplay from the novel by Raymond Chandler.

Montgomery, unfortunately has treated the first person as a gimmick, to create novelty, rather than what it is: the basic esthetic problem in film story-telling, up to now bogged down in a conventional detached third person technique simply because the earliest film makers tried to do what the stage did. And because their elemental lenses permitted nothing more.

First person story telling is one of the most serious concerns that can confront an experimental film maker, and it must be approached with daring, imagination and depth of understanding. These, unfortunately are lacking in *Lady in the Lake*.

It is my conviction (and I hope, if I am wrong, that those responsible will correct me) that this film was written to be shot in the third person, and that Montgomery superimposed the first-person technique on a finished script. If that be the case, the responsibility, as I suspect, rests solely on the director's shoulders. If the script was written originally for first-person telling, then the shortcomings of the scriptwriter are so great as to be truly unbelievable.

Let me, till proof of the contrary, exonerate the writer and deal with the film on the basis of its having been written in conventional style, with the new narrative technique superimposed. Therein, of

HAROLD J. SALEMSON has for the last sixteen years been one of the leading film critics for French and American publications. He spent four years in the Army.

course, lies the root of all its faults: as the film stands, it should have been apparent that it was impossible to shoot it in the first person without revising the script considerably, if not entirely, at least in technical details.



Now, when a story is told in the first person, the spectator is asked to identify himself completely with the storyteller. But the spectator has lived all his life in his own body, seen his own face in mirrors, in photographs, and therefore needs constant reminder that he has BECOME Robert Montgomery. To achieve this constant reminder, any first person film would require frequent and highly judicious use of mirrors, reflections in windshields or other polished surfaces, and possibly some device which would from time to time allow the character to be seen in the third person (either as he observes himself, or as he describes himself and his actions to the audience). In this connection *Lady in the Lake* is woefully weak: Montgomery realized the need of mirrors, but used them much too infrequently (and without imagination).

There is also the fact that in everyday life we are constantly conscious of the bodies we inhabit. But even as I sit at this typewriter, focusing my eyes on it and on the paper in it, I also see, subconsciously if not consciously, my arms (from above the elbows on down), my chest, my lap and my legs. In a word, whether walking along the street, carrying on a conversation or doing some type of work, our eyes almost continuously encompass some part or parts of our own bodies, unless one is resolutely looking straight ahead of him, as in the military position of Attention.

This, with very few exceptions, Montgomery has completely overlooked. A little imagination would have brought him to use a shot or two in which Philip Marlowe looks back over his shoulder (seeing it in the foreground of the shot), or to have him drop a cigarette as he walks down a street, stamping it out with his foot — in which case, the whole body (or at least one side of it) from the chest and shoulder down would have been visible.

As for the use of mirrors themselves, not once does the character, on entering a new room or house, go up to a mirror to check on his shave,

or the condition of that little blemish on his chin, or other such intimate mirror-gestures which are common to all of us.

Yet another important point is the matter of pan shots. In looking rapidly from one object to another, we do not focus on the unimportant space in between. We may shut our eyes, or see the intervening space only in a blur, or, yet, if turning rapidly enough, not see it at all. But each time Montgomery looks from one person or one object to another, the camera makes the complete pan, with the fuzzy, dizzying effect such a shot always has when the camera does not slow up to study each object as it passes. I submit that a suggestion of the turn, a quick cut, and a pick up of the end of the turn would have given a much more realistic impression.

There are also the numerous points involved technically in conveying the sway in a man's line of vision as he walks, his jerky descent of stairs (he does not glide down as on a slide), the blinking of his eyelids, to say nothing of depth of focus (a telephone held to the ear and mouth is in focus when you see it, not blurred as in *Lady in the Lake*).

Now, it is quite possible that audiences are not yet ready for an entire film unrelievedly told in the first person, through one character's eyes. This is undoubtedly particularly true if that character is a great star, and the main attraction of the film, as in Montgomery's case: the people want to SEE him. One solution, therefore, might be to have the narrator-first person played by a secondary character, making the need of mirroring his face less imperative.

There are probably a dozen other devices that could be used. And a judicious varying of them could eliminate many of the technical problems of spectator concentration which the first first-person films would doubtless create. One can well imagine, for instance, the Somerset Maugham character of *The Razor's Edge* thus narrating certain scenes, and our seeing some of them through his eyes. But all this is for the future.

When Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* was first shown, a very great European director came out of the showing and was appalled: "This film has set the art of motion pictures back twenty years," he said. What he meant was that the film would make no money. Or that certain

persons within the industry would at least find it to their advantage to create the impression that the film had been a flop, and that as a result other directors would not be allowed for years to use the many startling innovations that Welles had introduced.

His prediction, fortunately, came only partly true.

Should *Lady in the Lake* suffer similarly, it will be a good five years before anyone else is allowed to make another film entirely in the first person, a procedure for which motion pictures, I am sure, were almost ready now, and which could soon have been accomplished, had this setback not occurred.

But a recent note in *Daily Variety* apprises us that director Delmer Daves, in his new Humphrey Bogart film, *The Dark Passage*, for which he wrote his own screenplay, will do about one third of the film in the first person, as seen through Bogart's eyes. The note reads:

"Gimmick similar to that used by Robert Montgomery in *Lady in the Lake* is employed by Warners for *Dark Passage*, in which Humphrey Bogart goes unseen except for his hands and feet for the first third of the film. Director Delmer Daves and cameraman Sid Hickox are abundantly supplied with technical problems as a result. Camera, doing everything that Bogart does, has to be kept at eye level — hence doors on the sets have to be heightened to more than seven feet to accommodate passage of camera magazines. When other players talk to Bogart, they speak into the camera. Currently Daves and Hickox are trying to capture with the camera the movement of a walking man as he sways slightly from side to side and rises and falls with each step. Another obtuse problem, not yet satisfactorily solved, is use of the lens to represent Bogart's drooping eyelids. Daves is trying a fringed arc over the lens, with a fuzzy outline to represent the lashes."

As can be seen, Daves appears to be cognizant of many of the problems which Montgomery failed to see (although the trade paper significantly brushes the matter off as a "gimmick," rather than the real esthetic problem that it is). Perhaps, by use of the technique in only part of the film — and because he will have written his screenplay with this in mind, instead of superimposing the technique merely as a novelty, as I remain certain was done with *Lady in the Lake*, — Daves may undo some of the harm done by Montgomery, solve some of the problems, and bring closer the day when first-person storytelling becomes an integral part of film technique, as it should be.

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HOW TO AVOID WRITING

LOUISE ROUSSEAU

THERE comes a lull in the life of every screenwriter when Time creeps in. Specifically, The Time to write that terrific story — the one that's going to crash him out of mediocrity if he ever gets the time to do it.

This is known as a Crisis.

Roughly, there are two Crises per story.

- (1) The moment the writer first gets the idea for a yarn; and,
- (2) The day he gets around to putting that blank sheet of paper in the typewriter with which to put the yarn on which.

Generally, considerable Time lapses between these two Crises.

This intervening period is one of comparative comfort for you, the writer. You can persuade yourself that you are cooking on the story and, in addition, there are numerous insurmountable mechanical difficulties which prevent you from putting it down.

But inevitably the Time of Second Crisis arrives. You've been cooking on the idea for a year and furthermore, you have the place to work, your typewriter has just been overhauled, there's a new ribbon in it, all your pencils are sharp, you have a ream of yellow paper from the last studio you inhabited, the children are in the country, there aren't any dirty dishes in the sink, the maid has already cleaned the house,

SWG member LOUISE ROUSSEAU, now under contract to a major studio, is a member of the Overall AAA Committee.

your agent has canvassed the studios and there just isn't anything for you now.

Right here, you think you're completely trapped. You think the only thing left to do is sit down alone with your typewriter and make words come out on that blank paper. You think this is really Crisis.

But you're wrong. There **are** ways around it.

Now is when you should ask yourself, "Do I **really** want to write this story?"

Nine times out of ten, this works.

You don't really want to write the story. It's dated. It's ahead of its time. The characters are too stereotyped. The characters are too far off the beam. And — the clincher — you're not the proper person to handle this material.

Quickly, you yank the paper out of the typewriter and, with a completely free conscience, go have a cup of coffee at Schwabs. If anybody asks you about that story you were cooking on, you say — mysteriously — you'd better hold off on that for a while . . . you're cooking on a whale of an idea now. People will nod understandingly and won't bother you for a while.



Meantime, the word goes around you have a hell of an idea you're working on — and this can last another six months. By that time you'll be back at a studio and people will forget the whole thing.

But let's suppose it's that "tenth" time when you ask yourself if you really want to write that story and the dismaying answer comes back, "Yes, I do want to write it — it's a swell yarn, and I'm just the guy to do it."

Then you're in for trouble and you really have to be ingenious about excuses.

Well, there's always the question of a title. You have to have a title before you can begin. So you look over the books in your library for suggestions. Natch, you come across several you've always meant to read but never had The Time. So you delve into these and if anybody

asks you what you're doing, you can say you're reading to see how so-and-so handled a similar situation or character.

Properly conducted, this search will almost always get you past The Crisis.

But if you're unlucky enough to have a title, or to find one right away, there are several other measures to which you can resort.

(1) You can do research — at the public library, at friends' houses, at bars.

(2) There's an obscure point which needs to be clarified but you can't track down the fellow who can do it for you.

(3) This is a fine time to get a new permanent, whip your wardrobe into shape and have bouts with your tailor.

(4) You should redecorate the house and build that extra room. This can go on for months. And besides consuming Time, painting and carpentry are wonderful activities for keeping your mind clear and blank so your subconscious is free to work out your story thoughts. In fact, these activities may be considered far superior to knitting or crocheting.

(5) Then, too, there's always a new house to buy. Once you get enough real estate agents on your trail, you have practically no worry about Spare Time.

(6) There must be an old hobby around somewhere you always meant to take up. Maybe the saxophone. Or piano. This is a wonderful device. Everytime you look at that blank sheet of paper in the typewriter, you remember you have to practice.

(7) And never underestimate the power of gardening. Not only does it take care of your daylight hours, it can use up your evenings on all sorts of botanical books, encyclopaedic research, and wonderful consultations with your neighbors who are encountering the same pest and fertilizer problems.

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SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD, INC.

1655 NO. CHEROKEE AVE., HOLLYWOOD 28, CALIFORNIA
AFFILIATED WITH AUTHORS' LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.

OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE BOARD, THE SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD: PRESIDENT, EMMET LAVERY; 1ST VICE-PRESIDENT, MARY McCALL, JR.; 2ND VICE-PRESIDENT, HOWARD ESTABROOK; 3RD VICE-PRESIDENT, HUGO BUTLER; SECRETARY, F. HUGH HERBERT; TREASURER, HAROLD BUCHMAN. EXECUTIVE BOARD: MELVILLE BAKER, HAROLD BUCHMAN, HUGO BUTLER, JAMES M. CAIN, LESTER COLE, PHILIP DUNNE, HOWARD ESTABROOK, F. HUGH HERBERT, TALBOT JENNINGS, RING LARDNER, JR., RANALD MacDOUGALL, MARY McCALL, JR., GEORGE SEATON, LEO TOWNSEND. ALTERNATES: MAURICE RAPF, GORDON KAHN, ISOBEL LENNART, VALENTINE DAVIES, HENRY MYERS, DAVID HERTZ. COUNSEL, MORRIS E. COHN. ASSISTANT SECRETARY, ALICE PENNEMAN.

E D I T O R I A L

IF A MAN, an organizer for one of the big labor unions, were to find his wife with child, and then, after the appropriate libations and hoorays, insist that she observe the 40-hour week, and gestate only eight hours a day, with strictly no gestation over the weekends, one could imagine the lady's taking a clout at his jaw, and observing that his professional convictions had somewhat gone to his head. Yet the principle he would be insisting on is hardly more far-fetched than the one currently in vogue for writers on a picture lot. For with writing a genital process, which must go on around the clock if it is to go on at all, we still find writers expected to keep the hours prescribed for talent not expected to obey the grim mandate to lie awake over problems on the unquestionably true assumption that if they can sleep over the story so can the audience.

One cannot blame the companies for this practice: it got into the business at a time when nobody was getting very fundamental about anything, and it was assumed that if an employe drew salary he should report for work. And one cannot blame writers for falling in with it

either, for with office space, secretarial help, typing, message service, and other assistance needed, it was natural that they began taking it for granted that working on the lot was the best way out, and that if they worked on the lot they should keep the hours of the lot.

Yet so many paradoxes have arisen from these assumptions, so many irritations in no way necessary, that it would seem that the time has come for all concerned, for writer, producer, director, and the company itself, to inquire whether the importance of the time clock in this matter hasn't been absurdly distorted. What is the core of the thing, from the producers' point of view? That the writer, if not required to keep hours, if free to get in his car, on the plea that he is thinking, and drive to the sea on a sunny afternoon, is not thinking at all, but shooting pool on the Santa Monica pier, and incidentally running up the story cost. And what is the core of it, from the writer's point of view? That being required to report for work at a time when work, when actual writing, that is, cannot possibly start, and sit around an office with it eight hours, when he will then have to sit around the house with it for another eight hours, and lie in bed with it for still another eight hours, is an irritation that ought not to be inflicted on him; and that being required to report for work, at other stages of the script, on the ground that conferences will be held that he must attend, when actually the conferences are postponed from day to day, upsets his self-respect, taps his head of steam, and throws his personal writing schedule completely out of gear.



Taking up the producer's fear first; among other ways, it is being taken care of by flat-rate deals, flat- $\&$ -straight-rate deals, percentage deals, etc. Indeed, something of the sort is finding favor among the independents and smaller majors, with the writer paid a sum, usually by the week with a minimum guarantee for so many weeks, at the end of which time he is to deliver a first script. Changes after that, since they are controlled more by the producer's ideas than the writer's, are made on salary. Under this arrangement, if the writer gets stuck and wants to take more time to do the assignment justice, he can do so without having an ant-panted producer on the phone every day wanting to know how he's

getting along, no desire to hurry him, just wanting to know if he needs help. And on the producer's side, he knows what he's hooked for, and he also knows the writer has every motive to step on it and get done, so that if delays arise they can be regarded as unavoidable.

But on the bigger lots, where straight salary is still the rule, we run into something that makes such a system impracticable. The producer, who usually insists on seeing the script sequence by sequence and discussing it that way, is almost invariably producing other pictures too, and thus keeps the writer waiting for the conferences he thinks necessary. Copy handed in Friday is not discussed until Thursday, with decisions reserved for Saturday; writing does not resume until Monday and the assignment drags on. On some lots the writer is permitted to remain at home when this situation develops: it would be wholly untrue to say that the studios, taking one with another, are unduly harsh in their attitude toward the question; things are usually left in the discretion of individual producers, and many of them are sensible men, personally friendly with their writers. Yet it is manifest, from any realistic view of the general picture, that if bills are run up, it is much more on account of studio practices than the personal infirmities of the writer. One might say "studio inefficiency," except for something that must never be forgotten when movie efficiency is the point under discussion. Total efficiency in the picture business, meaning efficiency as measured by its ultimate effect on profits, may be better served by the fractional inefficiency of some brilliant producer who keeps his writers waiting but turns in smashes when the film is finally in the cans, than by some fractionally efficient producer who is punctual with his writers but not so successful at the box office. Like the flurry some time ago, when the New York intellectuals began proving to the bankers how profligate the directors were in their use of film, it begets a dialectic by no means so simple as it seems; as it turned out that those directors who shot 100,000 feet of film gave their cutters something with which to make a picture, whereas the 20,000-foot boys had provided nothing but material for a dreary flock of B's, so it often turns out that over the long pull the present system has much to be said for it that is more important than

the amount of fingernail the writers bite off that might otherwise have gone into the manicurist's pink paw.

However, allowing for the screwy nature of this business we're in, not shooting the producers as they're doing their best, and all other things of a relevant nature, it still remains true that the time clock is an affliction the writer ought not to have to put up with. It bears no logical relation to his work and often interferes with it. It is something that writers, producers, and particularly agents could begin to make the subject of a policy, so that in some instances, and perhaps in the not too distant future in all instances, deals can be made that eliminate it, and at the same time turn out to be more favorable to both sides of the desk than the deals being made at present.



SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD STUDIO CHAIRMEN

COLUMBIA — Ted Thomas; Ray Schrock, alternate.

MGM — Gladys Lehman, chairman; Sidney Boehm, Marvin Borowsky, Anne Chapin, Margaret Fitts, Charles Kaufman.

REPUBLIC — Franklin Adreon; alternate, John K. Butler.

20th CENTURY-FOX — Wanda Tuchock; alternate, Richard Murphy.

WARNER BROS. — John Collier.

PARAMOUNT — Jesse Lasky, Jr.

UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL — Silvia Richards; alternates, Howard Dimsdale, Ian Hunter.

RKO — Daniel Mainwaring; alternate, Bess Taffel.

REPORT AND COMMENT

WRITING IS OUR BUSINESS

By Walter Reilly

I have just read Mr. Arthur Strawn's highly sensible article, "It Ain't The Stork" in the January Screen Writer. His views are well taken, I think, and nicely stated. Surely there can be no argument about Guild participation in "politics"; it is, as Mr. Strawn points out, quite an automatic business. There is an aspect of his discussion, however, that which deals with the Guild as a trade union and its function as such, which prompts me to write.

I'm new here; relatively speaking, that is. A year and a half in Hollywood, writing for motion pictures, isn't long by many standards, but it is long enough for me to be oriented to the peculiarities of the town and the business.

No stately squib accompanies my name, outlining my literary accomplishments, because there aren't any worth mentioning. Fresh from the labyrinth of radio writing which originally brought me here from New York, I found Hollywood an energetic, pulsating, frenetic place offering vast opportunity to those either qualified to set words down in comparatively literate order, or those with an obliging uncle. There is a plethora of both, I find, and occasionally they overlap.

At the number of Guild meetings which I have attended with open ears and a nodding acquaintance with practically nobody, I found a severe discrepancy between the definition I had held of a trade union and the actual operation of our Guild. It was in the matter of qualifications.

A trade union, by definition, is an organization composed of craftsmen unit-

WALTER REILLY is a member of the SWG. He identifies himself further in the article above.

ed by common working problems in order to insure good working conditions, wages and hours. There are certain basic qualifications necessary to join one. A basic qualification of membership in, say, a carpenter's union, is that the prospective member know how to saw wood, drive nails, plane surfaces and make neat joints — a statement so obvious as to be unnecessary. Now, qualifications to write for pictures; hence, qualifications for Guild membership seem, to me, something else again. How can you measure them tangibly? What are a SWG member's basic requirements? What makes a writer a writer for purposes of Guild membership? His ability to perform the physical function of holding a pencil and writing with it? The extent of his education? The size of his vocabulary? Or even a string of hit plays in New York?

It turns out that what makes him eligible for membership is the matter of acknowledged credit on the screen. He doesn't even have to be good. As a matter of fact, he can have acquired a single credit, probably split, two years ago, without having worked since, and still have a voice in policy equal to the veteran screen writer with a list of credits as long as your arm. Should this, you ask, outraged, prejudice his right to be a member of a union? Or his right to the protection it offers? Certainly not. There are incompetents in any business. But many of us who loudly proclaim we are a trade union only mean it when the Guild works as a political force. They can't mean it any other way, because the Guild is not a trade union in the sense that its members have a trade that can be gauged. And that the Guild should work as a political force is a natural thing. It should, has and will. But, a distinction should be made between a writer engaging in political action, and a politician using a writer's

guild as a springboard for action irrelevant to writing.

This is a carping point, perhaps, but I make it as a newcomer with an enormous respect for the job of writing for the screen. Which brings me to the suggestion I have long had in mind. I think the Guild would do well to occupy itself, from time to time, with the **craft**, and not exclusively with the Guild as a political instrument which (as Mr. Strawn indicates) it is, even in spite of itself. The Guild, as representative of writers, should devote at least part of its efforts to the product of the writer — not as a union member; not as a political force; but as a **writer**.

SWG Craft Seminars

I think it would be refreshing to attend a Guild meeting and find the agenda concerning itself with matters pertaining, say, to scenario form, or the documentary film technique, or — to be even more specific — the relative merits of current films and how they got to be as good (or bad) as they are, from a writing standpoint. This, it strikes me, would be a wonderful service to the membership and damned interesting in the bargain.

I believe I have said I'm all for the Guild's participation in union matters and their supporting fellow-Guilds when it is for the general good. But we have all seen how meeting after meeting is stultified with endless discussions of prospective action to be taken — action which, even if resolved in agreement, we have no power to implement, at the moment at least. Frequently this is a ponderous waste of time, as it is purely academic, regardless of the merit of the respective positions taken.

I have mentioned my own relatively short connection with motion picture writing not as a biographical sop to myself, but to indicate that I am still new enough here to be objective about the Guild. Ideally, even with the most desirable of new contracts (which we hope to negotiate in 1948) and the final realization of the Guild as a very potent force to be reckoned with in the industry (which

it is not, now; let's face it), it will still be, primarily a writers' group. For all the professional problems discussed at the meetings I've attended, we might just as well have been archaeologists.

It is just possible that discussions of screenplay technique, or, for example a report on the type of original story material currently most in demand, will be of invaluable assistance to a young screen writer who has no other way of getting this information. He will feel his Guild has done him an invaluable service in the matter of his livelihood and this is what he considers first. That he be paid a living wage when he **does** work, a wage commensurate with his efforts and his worth to his producer is a matter which the Guild has already and properly seen to and will continue to see to. That is the function of the Guild; its chief one, assuredly. It can do a lot more for the membership.

Inviting Outside Speakers

I suppose the reason such discussions as I've suggested haven't ever been undertaken (if they've been thought of, which is likely) is that they could easily degenerate into personal attacks on the literary endeavors of the membership. That it would not be fair to gang up on the writer whose latest effort made the list of the year's Ten Worst is evident, just as it would be even more sticky to analyze the Academy Award Winner's genius in public discussion. However, I don't think things need go that far.

Couldn't the Board invite, say, the story editors of various studios to speak at meetings? Or, in fact, the producers themselves? Such a procedure would not only be of interest to the majority of the membership, but I can't help believing it would do a lot to mitigate some of the bad feeling generated by the heat of some of our discussions about the producer group. That is, unless the members would prefer to maintain a comfortable, classic enmity just for the hell of having it.

I make a living here, and hope to con-

tinue to do so. As for my talent, my opinion of it is my own, as is any writer's; and if a string of producers happens to concur in that opinion, then life can be beautiful. Anyway, writing is our business, and our Guild should be, as well as a clearing house for all other kinds of opinion — anywhere from dissertations on Lenin or Warren G. Harding to sympathy strikes — a means by which we can improve the tools of our craft, as well as safe-guarding the mechanics of our relations to the rest of the industry.

REDS IN HOLLYWOOD

(An Editorial from The Chicago Times)

One of the zaniest foibles of the current rage against Communists is the theory that Hollywood is infested with, run by, and generally populated with Communists or ardent fellow-travelers.

By and large the Chicago Tribune is principally responsible for this rage. The Tribune's correspondent went to some extraordinary lengths to prove Hollywood's Red bias.

Among other things, the Tribune cited The Ox Bow Incident, a 20th Century-Fox production, as a piece of subversive material.

The Ox Bow Incident, is a highly refined "Western." It tells the story of a bunch of cowboy thugs who resort to lynch law and string up a guy subsequently proven innocent of the crime of which he was accused. It was sent abroad with the blessings of the Office of War Information as an object lesson as to the necessity of preserving justice under a system of lawful order.

The Tribune called it "Red propaganda."

Another picture the Tribune thought was communistic was the RKO production Hitler's Children. The expose of Nazi "youth camps" was written by one

Emmet Lavery from documentary evidence, much of it obtained from official sources.

* * *

Whenever the more hysterical red-baiters list Hollywood's "Reds" or fellow-travelers, Emmet Lavery's name is prominently listed. Lavery, a studious, thoughtful, former college professor, is president of the Screen Writers' Guild. That makes him anathema to certain elements in Hollywood — and elsewhere. The fact that he is an earnest Catholic layman with the good Catholic's hatred of communism is conveniently ignored.

There ARE some Communists among Hollywood writers and actors. Writers and actors, in common with most creative persons, tend to sponsor underdog causes. In general they are well to the left of the average citizen. Some of them frankly admit being party members. Others are sufficiently devoted to Communist doctrine that even though they are not party members, to all intents and purposes they might as well be.

But the assertion that leftists control Hollywood or its output is sheer nonsense. The content and form of motion pictures are controlled by producers and high studio executives. In the main this group is about as left-wing as Alfred P. Sloan or Sewell Avery.

About the silliest assertion made in the Tribune series of articles was the statement that Hollywood was over-friendly to Russia because three Russian-born families — dynasties, the Tribune writer called them — dominate the motion picture industry. The three were the Schencks, the Mayers and the Warners. Actually it would be hard to find three more violently anti-Red families in the nation. Louis B. Mayer, fabulous head of MGM, in particular, almost froths at the mention of Communism.

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To be sure, Warners did produce Mis-

sion to Moscow, the story of former Ambassador Joseph E. Davies. This is by far the most pro-Russian picture ever made in Hollywood.

Both Warners and the Office of War Information, which warmly supported the project, were aware that this film "went overboard" for Russia. But at the time the picture was released Hitler's troops were deep in Soviet territory. The Red army had its back to the wall. There was vital need for building Russian morale and for assuring the Soviet of our friendship and support.

Mission to Moscow was invaluable in that respect. It was widely shown all over Russia.

There were other films produced in Hollywood during the war which were strongly anti-Nazi or anti-Fascist. The OWI Hollywood office did everything possible to promote such productions. The reasons are obvious, and equally obvious is the fact that no pro-communism, as such, was involved.

Conservative and level-headed Hollywood executives laugh at the idea of the motion picture industry being Communist-dominated. Such men as Byron Price, chairman of the Motion Picture Producers Association, and Donald Nelson, head of the Independent Producers, ought to know about any "Communist menace." And they flatly deny that there is any.

FREEDOM OF THE MOVIES

A Book Review

In time-clocking movie kisses, how does Mr. Breen's Production Code Administration decide just how many seconds a kiss should last? What is the exact formula by which Clark Gable must make love to Greer Garson? Why cannot the words **lousy, damn, hell, tart** or the phrase **hold your hat** be used on the screen? What are the restrictions against the film portrayal of crime? And in the face of all these niggling rules, why is

there so much suggestive titillation on the screen, and why does the most shocking kind of criminal violence monopolize so much film footage?

These and other totems and taboos of the Breen office are discussed in an important book written by Dr. Ruth A. Inglis as a special report from the Commission on Freedom of the Press. (**Freedom of the Movies**, by Ruth A. Inglis. University of Chicago Press. \$3).

This book is undoubtedly one of the most thorough and well-documented jobs ever done on this subject. It should be essential reading for everyone interested either in the production of motion pictures or in their impact on the public mind.

It contains a Commission declaration on the present status of the movies, and six Commission recommendations formulated as the result of careful research. The recommendations are:

1. Constitutional guarantees of freedom of the press should be recognized as including motion pictures.
2. Monopolistic control of production, distribution and theatrical outlets should not be tolerated by the U. S. government.
3. The motion picture industry should meet fully its social responsibility to promote as far as possible an intelligent understanding of domestic and international affairs.
4. The industry should fulfill to the utmost of its ability its implicit obligation to develop the screen's artistic and intellectual possibilities, and use part of its profits to promote experimental film ventures.
5. The box office public should insist on higher standards of screen entertainment — and schools, libraries, churches, women's clubs, labor unions, business clubs and other organized groups should

work to raise the general level of critical standards regarding movies.

6. A national advisory board with the broadest kind of public sponsorship should be set up to review and propose changes in the Motion Picture Production and Advertising Codes.

Dr. Inglis, in her documented study of the motion picture industry and its efforts to regulate itself in order to avoid too much outside censorship, deals authoritatively with the social role of the screen, the history and economics of the industry, the early attempts to control it, the role of self-regulation, and the necessity of some kind of controls.

She is familiar with the operation of the Breen office, having done much of her research work there. While she is critical of many of its methods and attitudes, she admits that regulation is essential, and that self-regulation within the industry is better than sporadic and irresponsible censorship from the outside. She refutes the idea that the Production Code Administration is under the control of the Catholic church. She believes it represents "a common denominator of all morally conservative points of view . . . compatible not only with Catholic but with Protestant and Jewish theology."

She expresses the opinion, however, that the P.C.A. does transgress its role of moral guardian and tries to assert an ultra-conservative social control over films. She quotes a letter Joseph Breen, code administrator, wrote to Samuel Goldwyn in 1937 regarding the picture *Dead End*:

"We would like to recommend in

passing that you be less emphatic throughout in the photographing of this script, in showing the contrast between the conditions of the poor in tenement houses and those of the rich in apartment houses. Specifically, we recommend you do not show, at any time, or at least that you do not emphasize, the presence of filth, or smelly garbage cans, or garbage floating in the river into which the boys jump for a swim. This recommendation is made under the general heading of good and welfare, because our reaction is that such scenes are likely to give offense."

In the end Dr. Inglis takes the view that outside censorship and its dangers of hysteria can be avoided if the industry faces its responsibilities and takes adult action to end some of the absurdities and hypocrisies inherent in the operation of the present P.C.A.

She elaborates on the Commission proposal for the subsidizing of experimental films made for mature rather than juvenile audiences. She proposes that the Production Code be revised by a commission that includes screen writers, directors, actors and exhibitors. She quotes liberally from *THE SCREEN WRITER* and *The Hollywood Quarterly*.

The Commission on Freedom of the Press, financially administered by the University of Chicago, was created to consider the freedom, functions and responsibilities of the major agencies of mass communication. It is under the chairmanship of Robert M. Hutchins, chancellor of the University of Chicago, and the vice-chairmanship of Zechariah Chaffee, Jr., professor of law, Harvard University.

R. S.

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“IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD”

Screen Writing Credits and Awards

Both victories and backsets mark the continuing struggle of the Screen Writers' Guild to achieve proper recognition of the basic contribution of the writer to the creation of good films.

On the victory side, there is the lifting of the long blackout of writers in the pages of Mr. W. R. Wilkerson's Hollywood Reporter. It happened suddenly, without preliminary notice or fanfare. Just after the February issue of The Screen Writer appeared with a reprint of the L. A. Daily News article, the Actors' Guild statement and SWG Secretary F. Hugh Herbert's letter concerning trade paper advertising pressures, the names of writers were removed from the Reporter's blacklist.

Maybe Mr. Herbert's realistic and amusing letter did the trick. Maybe it was the Actors' Guild statement, and the resulting uncomfortable publicity. Or maybe it was just a coincidence, and the Reporter merely decided to wriggle as quietly as possible off a hook that had become increasingly sharp and painful.

Certainly it involves no change in the position of the SWG against personal advertising or its resistance to personal advertising pressures.

The case of Look magazine is another story. It has again ignored writers in the distribution of its film awards. Following are three letters concerning this anachronistic attitude on the part of Look:

January 31, 1947

Mr. Jean Herrick,
Look Magazine,
7046 Hollywood Blvd.,
Hollywood, California.

Dear Mr. Herrick:

When I accepted your invitation to attend the presentation of the Look Awards on February 4th, I naturally assumed that the editors of Look had finally come to the conclusion that the writing of screenplays has something to do with the making of good films, and that, as a result, there would be an award for screenwriting this year.

Much to my surprise, I have just learned that this is not the case. I am, therefore, returning herewith the two tickets of admission. Since screen writers have no part in the ceremony, I see no point in your asking the President of the Screen Writers' Guild to be among those present. The omission of a writing award is startling enough, I should think, without a

Guild officer being on hand to applaud the omission.

I am familiar with your recent correspondence with our Secretary, F. Hugh Herbert, and I am familiar with some of the difficulties which Look has outlined. May I point out that those difficulties are more fancied than real and are not shared by other agencies that make similar awards.

Photoplay's Gold Medal for screen writing was given to Dudley Nichols for his screen play on The Bells of St. Mary's; it was considered by Photoplay to be the most popular all-around film of the year, and the Award quite logically went to the person who did the screen-play.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has for many years now given a variety of writing awards. The formula used to determine these awards may not be as perfect as some of us would prefer, but they are steps in the right direction. They bring recognition to the

art of screen writing even if at times it is an imperfect kind of recognition. And that illustrates a basic point well worth knowing: the difficulty that may be involved in computing an award is no reason to withhold an award.

Actually, on the basis of your general selections this year, you would have no difficulty in making a writing award. On every picture which you have honored — The Razor's Edge, Duel in the Sun, Best Years of Our Lives, The Yearling, The Jolson Story — the final screenplay credit happened to be a solo credit.

True, you express some concern in one of your letters for the proper recognition of original material, in cases where the screenplay was based on a play or novel, but, as Mr. Herbert pointed out in one of his letters, in cases where only **one** award can be given for screen writing it seems only fair the award should be for the screenplay, for the instrument that finally converted the material into the new medium.

As screen writers we naturally have the greatest respect for material that originates in other media, and we have always sought to protect the proper credit for such material. But, if the original publisher and author of The Razor's Edge do not share credit with Mr. Zanuck in your producer's award, nor the publisher and author of the Best Years of Our Lives with Samuel Goldwyn, it would seem fair enough to concentrate on **screen writing** if you were to give a single award for that particular contribution.

The theater, for instance, has found no difficulty in similar situations. Marc Connelly received the Pulitzer Prize in 1930 for The Green Pastures which was adapted from Roark Bradford's "Old Man Adam and His Chillun." Everyone had the greatest regard for Mr. Bradford, but the award was given for a theater achievement.

As it stands now you have given no credit to a writer in any field merely because you have considered it a bit difficult to compute the credit.

It would seem to me that the most satisfactory solution would have been for

you to give the credit for screenwriting, in the case of the film you selected, exactly as that credit appears on the screen — a credit, incidentally, which by industry agreement is determined by the credit machinery of the Screen Writers' Guild. Such credits always recognize the author of the original material as well as the screenplay writer or writers. I realize that in some instances this might have meant an extra name or two, but, considering the manifold contributions of writers in all fields to the screen, this extra emphasis would not be inappropriate.

The editors of Look are to be commended for their action in recognizing the creative talents of Samuel Goldwyn, Darryl Zanuck, Jennifer Jones, Gregory Peck, Harold Russell, Gregg Toland, Clarence Brown, but as President of the Screen Writers' Guild I must vigorously protest the disservice to the industry and to the public caused by the omission of a writing award.

Screenplays don't just happen, Mr. Herrick. A lot of blood, sweat, and tears — and a rather special kind of visual imagination — go into the best of them, just as in the case of good novels and good plays. And I venture to suggest that any of the people you have honored would be the first to agree that Lamar Trotti had something fairly indispensable to contribute to The Razor's Edge, Paul Osborn to The Yearling, Robert Sherwood to The Best Years of Our Lives, and Stephen Longstreet to The Jolson Story.

Don't you think it is time, Mr. Herrick, that Look took an adult look at picture making and give the writer his fair share of credit?

It won't hurt those who by the very nature of their work have always stood a little closer to the spotlight — and it will give the public a more comprehensive knowledge of the industry which it, the public, has made possible.

Sincerely,
EMMET LAVERY,
President
Screen Writers' Guild

In answer to an earlier letter from the SWG concerning the addition of a Writer's Award to the list of Look magazine awards for motion picture achievement, Managing Editor Jack Guenther replied as follows:

January 7, 1947

Mr. F. Hugh Herbert, Secretary
Screen Writers' Guild, Inc.

Dear Mr. Herbert:

Mr. Logan is no longer connected with Look but I will attempt to answer your letter regarding the addition of a writer's award to the Look moving picture achievement awards.

As in 1945 Look again will give writer credits in our list of the year's best pictures. However, we have not yet been able to settle on a procedure of selecting a writer's award to accompany the awards given to actors, directors, producers and cinematographers.

The things which bog us down are these:

1. In many cases a moving picture is based on a novel, on a play or an original idea which is not necessarily that of the screen writer. The first point to clear up is how much credit would be given to the novelist, the playwright, or the man who conceived the original idea.

2. In many cases where a novel is the base of a picture, some writer is given credit for adaptation. The problem here is how much credit should be given to the adaptor.

3. Even when a picture has been based on a novel and then on an adaptation, very frequently 2 or 3 writers are given credit for the actual finished screen play. It is almost impossible for the magazine to determine which of these writers actually did most of the important work.

4. To still further complicate the matter, sometimes credits are given for special dialogue in addition to the origi-

nal screen credits. Let me give you an example by using different types of screen play credits.

1. The Razor's Edge. This was based on a Maugham novel with screen play by Lamar Trotti. Into this category would fall *Saratoga Trunk*, based on a novel by Edna Ferber, screen play by Casey Robinson.

2. The Bells of St. Mary's. Screen play by Dudley Nichols based on original story by Leo McCarey, the director.

3. The Corn is Green. Screen play by Casey Robinson and Frank Cavette based on stage play by Emlyn Williams.

4. Lost Weekend. Based on a novel by Charles Jackson. Screen play by Charles Brackett and Billy Wilder, the producer and director respectively.

5. The Sin of Harold Diddlebock, an original idea by Preston Sturges, written by Preston Sturges, directed and produced by Preston Sturges.

My point is, are we to judge the screen play of *The Razor's Edge*, in which Lamar Trotti began with the plot and characters furnished by another man against a job such as *The Sin of Harold Diddlebock*, which one man conceived and executed. Are we to judge the screen play of *Isobel Lennart* on *Anchors Aweigh* against the *Lost Weekend* when Lennart did not control either direction or production while Charles Brackett and Wilder knew that they would be able to execute what they had written.

I won't attempt to go any deeper into the many ramifications of this problem because I think I have put fairly simply the obstacles we face in trying to select a screen play for an award knowing that the base of competition was solid and sound and that we were giving the proper credit to the proper man.

In most cases the producer bosses his show. In most cases the director proceeds along a certain line without too much interference and in most cases the cinematographer handles his own camera. I think this is most true in pictures which

have the quality to be nominated for an award. In writing the screen play, however, there are so many variables that unless we can work out a base of judgment I think we would lose friends among the screen writers rather than gain them by giving a writing achievement award.

I can say with certainty that we are personally willing to consider the addition of such an award if the means of selection can be determined. If you have ideas on the subject of a plan for such a method, I suggest you get in touch with Jean Herrick, Look's West Coast Manager at the Look office, 7046 Hollywood Blvd. He is more directly responsible for the Look awards than any other individual in our organization. I believe that the screen play is certainly an increasingly important part of any quality feature and I would like to see credit given where credit is due.

Sincerely,

JACK GUENTHER
Managing Editor

Following is the SWG reply to Mr. Guenther:

January 20, 1947

Dear Mr. Guenther:

Your extremely interesting and sympathetic letter of January 7th poses many of the problems which have been the concern of the Screen Writers' Guild since its formation.

The proper determination of credits has always been of dual significance to our members. In addition to prestige and pride of craftsmanship, the matter of credits directly affects the economic welfare of the writers. It is deemed to be such a valuable consideration that in almost all individual contracts, and in the Basic Minimum Agreement between the Screen Writers' Guild and the Producers, it is so classified.

On this economic plane, it is significant to note, credit for the authorship of a screenplay is universally recognized as

far more desirable and likely to be remunerative than credit for the authorship of the original material, or credit in any other category, such as adaptation of original material.

Our membership consists primarily of men and women who write material directly for the screen; in addition, and also among these, we have a great many professional playwrights, novelists, short story writers and writers in other fields. Our organization, however, by its very name, is manifestly more concerned with those who write screenplays and with their unique and diverse problems.

If I may draw a simple analogy from another field it is invariably the architect of a building who receives credit for, and is identified with, the structure. Frank Lloyd Wright, for instance, is universally recognized for the architecture of the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo despite the fact that scores of artists contributed to the detail and even despite the fact that the architect himself may have adapted his prime concept from the work or style of other structures designed by other architects.

The point which I am trying to make is really very simple. You quote, for example, in your letter the instance of *The Razor's Edge* which was based on a novel by Somerset Maugham and made into a screenplay by Lamar Trotti. It is the contention of the Screen Writers' Guild that should the motion picture, *The Razor's Edge* receive any award, then Mr. Trotti as the author of the screenplay rather than Mr. Maugham as the author of the source material, should be entitled to share in that award.

The Screen Writers' Guild, through its own arbitration machinery, always determines the final allocation of credits on any picture; in many cases, as you correctly point out, more than one name is credited to the authorship of the screenplay, but, save in the instance of musicals, never more than two names. This circumstance should present no problems to the editors of *Look*. The Pulitzer

prize has not infrequently been awarded to collaborating playwrights.

You ask in your letter, "Are we to judge the screenplay of *The Razor's Edge*, in which Lamar Trotti began with the plot and characters furnished by another man, against a job such as *The Sin of Harold Diddlebock*, which one man conceived and executed." In a word—yes. In other words, in considering the relative merits of *The Razor's Edge* as against *The Sin of Harold Diddlebock*, the Screen Writers' Guild is opposed to any theory which would discriminate against Mr. Trotti, merely by virtue of the fact that he was not the author of the original material. We believe, in effect, that the translation to the medium of the screen of material conceived in some other medium, requires no less imagination, professional skill, competence and good taste, than a similar translation of the screen writer's own original concept. Not infrequently, I might add, it requires a higher degree of skill and the exercise of even greater inventive and imaginative powers.

I am sending a copy of this letter to your Mr. Herrick and will suggest to him that the Executive Board of the Screen Writers' Guild would be delighted to have him attend one of our future meetings so that the matter may be further explored.

Sincerely,
F. HUGH HERBERT
Secretary

Time Magazine is a frequent offender in the omission of screen writers' credits. Recently Mary C. McCall, Jr., SWG 1st vice-president and Credits Committee chairman, sent the following protest to Time concerning the magazine's elimination of Sy Bartlett's writing credit from an article on the picture 13 Rue Madeleine:

The Screen Writers' Guild is glad to see the name of a writer in a Time motion picture review. Customarily Time's critics seem to believe that pictures are

acted, directed, produced, but not written. The January 6th Time review of 13 Rue Madeleine mentions the fact that *The House on 92nd Street* was worked on by the same competent team, producer Louis de Rochemont, director Henry Hathaway, writer John Monks, Jr. 13 Rue Madeleine was written for the screen by John Monks, Jr. and Sy Bartlett. Mr. Bartlett was absent from Hollywood for five years, serving as Captain, then Major, and finally Lt. Colonel in the Army Air Forces in the European and Pacific Theatres. Screen credits are financially and professionally valuable to a writer, and his credit on 13 Rue Madeleine is Mr. Bartlett's first in five years. Your review inferentially deprives him of it, by mentioning his collaborator and not him. The screenplay of *The House on 92nd Street* was written by Barre Lyndon, Charles G. Booth and John Monks, Jr. Certainly Mr. Monks shares writing credits for both pictures but the wording of your review creates the impression that he was solely responsible for both screenplays. For the sake of accuracy and fairness, please do what you can to give Time's readers the facts, and Mr. Bartlett, as well as Mr. Lyndon and Mr. Booth, the credit they earned.

MARY C. MCCALL, JR.

Following is the reply from Time:

January 22, 1947

Dear Miss McCall:

We were sorry to learn that our review of 13 Rue Madeleine gave the false impression that John Monks, Jr. was the sole author of the picture.

In fact, we knew quite well that Sy Bartlett had co-authored, but the point we were trying to make was that some of the same men who had worked on *The House on 92nd Street* had teamed in this new film. Since Mr. Bartlett had nothing to do with "The House" we didn't include his name among the members of the "team."

SHIRLEY HAMILTON
For the Editors

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

Aubrey Wisberg writes the following comment on Sydney A. Sanders' statement, published last month in the Screen Writer, concerning royalties on Heaven Only Knows:

I read with some surprise and a mild simmer the announcement by Sidney Sanders, a literary agent for Ernest Haycox, in reply to Martin Field's illuminating article Read 'Em and Weep that Haycox had written a motion picture adaptation of an "idea" by the undersigned titled Heaven Only Knows, now in production by Seymour Nebenzal for United Artist's Release.

"In the interest of accuracy," to quote

Mr. Sanders, the so-called "Idea" of Heaven Only Knows to which he refers so deprecatingly expressed itself in some thirty tightly written pages embodying a compact dramatic story adhering to the best precepts governing such in the matter of beginning, middle, and end, introduced and developed all the basic characters which will be shown on the screen, provided the necessary sub-plots, created the conflict, indicated the romantic angles, and added the fillip of a good title which the producer has not seen fit to change.

Where Mr. Sanders gets his ideas I really don't know.

AUBREY WISBERG.

★ ★ ★

COMING IN THE SCREEN WRITER

MARTIN FIELD

JAY RICHARD KENNEDY

ROGER BRAY

HERBERT MARGOLIS

JUDITH PODSELMER

TWICE TOLD TALES

ASSIGNED TO TREASURY

ENGLISH REPORT

UNESCO FILM SYMPOSIUM

FILMS TODAY IN MIDDLE EUROPE

And further articles by LOUIS ADAMIC, HUGO BUTLER, EDWIN BLUM, SHERIDAN GIBNEY, ALFRED HAYES, RICHARD G. HUBLER, ROLAND KIBBEE, ARTHUR KOBER, STEPHEN LONG-STREET, JOSEPH MANKIEWICZ, VLADIMIR POZNER, BERNARD SCHUBERT, ARTHUR STRAWN, and others.

NEWS NOTES

★ Current programs in the N. Y. Museum of Modern Art's History of the Motion Picture are: The Film and Contemporary Life: March of Time, Vol. 1, No. 2. Cavalcade. March 3, 4, 5, 6; The Social Film (III): The President Vanishes. March 7, 8, 9; American Film Comedy (XIV): It Happened One Night, March 10, 11, 12, 13; American Film Comedy (XV): La Cucaracha, David Harum, March 14, 15, 16; Mystery & Violence (III): The Thin Man, March 17, 18, 19, 20; Travel & Anthropology (V): Congo, Baboona, March 21, 22, 23; Mystery & Violence (IV): Mutiny on the Bounty, March 24, 25, 26, 27; American Film Comedy (XVI): Ruggles of Red Gap, March 28, 29, 30; Screen Personalities (IV): Garbo, March 31, April 1, 2, 3.

★ SWG member Dalton S. Raymond's first novel, *Earthbound*, sold to Ziff-Davis within ten days after mailing. It will be published this summer.

★ Overture in Two Keys, a radio play by SWG member Malvin Wald and Pamela Wilcox, was broadcast on the CBS Suspense program on January 16th. Joan Bennett played the leading role. This script had previously won the 1946 Stephen Vincent Benet Award of Stanford University as the best radio play of the year.

★ SWG member Elick Moll slanted his story, *The Tax*, for publication in an intellectual magazine. It was snapped up by *Cosmopolitan*.

★ SWG member Millen Brand's story, *Double Engagement*, was published in the *January Woman's Day*.

★ The *Two Worlds* of Johnny Truro, a new novel by SWG member George Sklar, was published by Little Brown on Feb. 17.

★ SWG member James M. Cain's new novel, *The Butterfly*, is the big book on the Knopf spring list. The publisher is promoting it with full page ads in the N. Y. papers.

★ The *Pitfall*, new novel by SWG member Jay Dratler, is on the book stands. It is published by Crowell.

★ The *Hollywood Quarterly*, co-sponsored by the Hollywood Writers Mobilization and the University of California, and published by the University of California Press, has three SWG members on its new board of editors. They are John Collier, James Hilton and Abraham Polonsky. Other editors are Samuel T. Farquhar, Franklin Fearing, Kenneth Macgowan, Irving Pichel and Franklin P. Rolfe. Sylvia Jarrico is assistant editor.

The Winter (January) issue, No. 2, Vol. 2, presents two articles on psychiatry and psychology in relation to films. They are written by Lawrence S. Kubie, M. D. and Dr. Franklin Fearing of UCLA. Robert Joseph and Gladwin Hill, *NYTimes* correspondent, write about the U. S. film program in Germany. Among other contributors are Leon Meadow, Arnold Perl, Mordecai Gorelik, John Houseman, Jay Leyda, Roger Manvell, Gordon Brian Ansell, SWG counsel Morris Cohn, Adolf Nichtenhauser, John Grierson, Herbert Edwards, Richard Griffith, Herman G. Weinberg, Henri Langlois, Herbert Margolis, Irving Pichel, Walter Rubsamen, Gilbert Seldes and Lewis Jacobs.

★ The last four lectures in the PEC's course, *Motion Pictures — Allusion and Reality* are:

Tues., March 4th — Harold J. Salemson on the role of Hollywood in foreign markets, the recent trade treaties, and reactions among the British, French and other peoples.

Tues., March 11th — Recent trends in content. Why the Growing Accent on Themes Which Feature Psychological Aberrations, Violence and Sex.

Tues., March 18th — Edward Huebsch on Characteristic in Films, Stereotypes, Treatment of Negroes, other national minorities and labor.

Tues., March 25th — The Summary Lecture by Arnold Manoff on the Effect of Hollywood Films on American Culture.

All lectures at the Screen Cartoonist's Hall at 8:30. Phone HOLLYWOOD 6291 for further information.

A LISTING OF SCREEN WRITERS' CREDITS
EARNED ON FEATURE PRODUCTIONS
OF CURRENT AND RECENT RELEASE

CREDITS

DECEMBER 1, 1946 TO FEBRUARY 1, 1947

A

ROBERT ADREY

Joint Screenplay (with Ivan Tors, Irmgard von Cube and Allen Vincent) SONG OF LOVE, MGM

B

DWIGHT V. BABCOCK

Joint Screenplay (with George Bricker) THE CORPSE CAME C.O.D., Col

LEONARDO BERCOVICI

*Contributor to Screenplay, MOSS ROSE, Fox

A. I. BEZZERIDES

*Joint Adaptation (with Ramona Stewart) DESERT TOWN (Hal Wallis) Par

JESS BOWERS

Sole Original Screenplay SILVER RANGE, Mono

MALCOLM STUART BOYLAN

Sole Original Screenplay FOR THE LOVE OF RUSTY, Col

MONTÉ BRICE

Joint Original Screenplay (with Edmund Hartmann, Frank Tashlin, and Robert Welch) VARIETY GIRL, Par

GEORGE BRICKER

Joint Screenplay (with Aubrey Wisberg) THE PAY-OFF (Eagle-Lion) PRC
Joint Screenplay (with Dwight Babcock) THE CORPSE CAME C.O.D., Col
Joint Original Story and Joint Screenplay (with Elsie Bricker) GAS HOUSE KIDS, PRC

ELSIE BRICKER

Joint Original Story and Joint Screenplay (with George Bricker) GAS HOUSE KIDS, PRC

JOHN BRIGHT

Joint Adaptation (with Robert Smith) I WALK ALONE (Hal Wallis), Par

*Academy Bulletin Only

ROBERT STEPHEN BRODE

Sole Screenplay DICK TRACY'S DILEMMA, RKO

GEORGE BRUCE

Joint Original Screenplay (with Lester Cole) FIESTA, MGM

NIVEN BUSCH

Sole Adaptation MOSS ROSE, Fox
Sole Original Screenplay PURSUED (U. S. Pic.), WB

JOHN K. BUTLER

Sole Original Screenplay SADDLE PALS, Rep

C

ANNE MORRISON CHAPIN

Joint Screenplay (with Whitfield Cook) HIGH BARBAREE, MGM

J. BENTON CHENEY

Sole Original Screenplay GENTLEMAN FROM TEXAS, Mono
Sole Original Screenplay RAIDERS OF THE SOUTH, Mono

SONIA CHERNUS

Joint Original Story (with George Ross) THE PAY-OFF, (Eagle-Lion) PRC

EDWARD CHODOROV

Sole Screenplay UNDERCURRENT, MGM

LENORE COFFEE

Story Basis THE GUILT OF JANET AMES, Col

LESTER COLE

Joint Original Screenplay (with George Bruce) FIESTA, MGM

ROYAL K. COLE

Sole Screenplay LIGHTNIN' STRIKES TWICE, Rep

EUGENE CONRAD

Joint Screenplay (with Arthur St. Clair) PHILO VANCE'S GAMBLE, (Eagle-Lion) PRC
*Additional Dialogue PHILO VANCE'S SECRET MISSION, (Eagle-Lion) PRC

In this listing of credits, published every other month in THE SCREEN WRITER, the following abbreviations are used: COL — Columbia Pictures Corporation; E-L — Eagle-Lion Studios; FOX — 20th Century-Fox Film Corporation; GOLDWYN — Samuel Goldwyn Productions, Inc.; MGM — Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios; MONO — Monogram Pictures Corporation; PAR — Paramount Pictures, Inc.; PRC — Producers Releasing Corporation of America; REP — Republic Productions, Inc.; RKO — RKO Radio Studios, Inc.; ROACH — Hal E. Roach Studio, Inc.; UA — United Artists Corporation; UNI — Universal-International Pictures; UWP — United World Pictures; WB — Warner Brothers Studios.

RICHARD S. CONWAY

Sole Screenplay YANKEE FAKIR, Rep

WHITFIELD COOK

Joint Screenplay (with Anne Morrison Chapin) HIGH BARBAREE, MGM

IRVING CUMMINGS, JR.

Joint Original Screenplay (with Robert G. North) DANGEROUS MILLIONS, (Sol M. Wurtzel) Fox

D

DELMER DAVES

Sole Screenplay DARK PASSAGE, WB

FRANK DAVIS

Joint Screenplay (with Jean Renoir) WOMAN ON THE BEACH, RKO

ALBERT DEMOND

Additional Dialogue LIGHTNIN' STRIKES TWICE, Rep

ARTHUR DREIFUSS

Joint Original Screenplay (with George H. Plympton) BETTY CO-ED, Col
Joint Original Screenplay (with Hal Collins) HIGH SCHOOL HERO, (Banner Prod.) Mono

E

IRVING ELMAN

Joint Screenplay (with Frank Gruber) ACCOMPLICE, PRC

CYRIL ENDFIELD

Sole Screenplay STORK BITES MAN, (Comet Prod.) UA

CHESTER ERSKINE

Joint Screenplay (with Fred F. Finklehoffe) THE EGG AND I, Uni

HARRY J. ESSEX

Sole Screenplay FLIGHT, RKO

F

ABEM FINKEL

Joint Screenplay (with Arnold Phillips) TIME OUT OF MIND, Uni

COREY FORD

Book Basis CLOAK AND DAGGER, (U. S. Pic.) WB

DEVERY FREEMAN

Joint Screenplay (with Louella MacFarlane and Allen Rivkin) THE GUILT OF JANET AMES, Col

EVERETT FREEMAN

Sole Screenplay IT HAPPENED ON FIFTH AVENUE, (Roy Del Ruth) Allied Artists

FRED FREIBERGER

Adaptation STORK BITES MAN, (Comet Prod.) UA

JULES FURTHMAN

Joint Screenplay (with Tom Reed) MOSS ROSE, Fox

G

PAUL GANGELIN

Sole Original Story BELLS OF SAN ANGELO, Rep

*Academy Bulletin Only

EILEEN GARY

Sole Original Screenplay LAW OF THE CANYON, Col

MARTIN M. GOLDSMITH

Sole Screenplay BLIND SPOT, Col

DAVID GOODIS

Joint Screenplay (with James Gunn) THE UNFAITHFUL, WB
Novel Basis DARK PASSAGE, WB

JOHN GRANT

Joint Screenplay (with Frederic I. Rinaldo and Robert Lees) THE BUCK PRIVATES COME HOME, Uni

ANNE GREEN

Sole Screenplay HER SISTER'S SECRET, (Henry Brash Prod.) PRC

FRANK GRUBER

Sole Screenplay BULLDOG DRUMMOND AT BAY, Col

Joint Screenplay (with Irving Elman) and Novel Basis ACCOMPLICE, PRC

JERRY GRUSKIN

Joint Original Screenplay (with Rowland Leigh) TARZAN AND THE HUNTRESS, (Sol Lesser) RKO

JAMES GUNN

Joint Screenplay (with David Goodis) THE UNFAITHFUL, WB

H

EDMUND L. HARTMANN

Joint Original Screenplay (with Frank Tashlin, Robert Welch, and Monte Brice) VARIETY GIRL, Par

JACK HENLEY

*Contributor to Screenplay Construction and Dialogue, THE CORPSE CAME C.O.D., Col

MICHAEL HOGAN

Sole Adaptation WOMAN ON THE BEACH, RKO

GEOFFREY HOMES

Sole Screenplay and Novel Basis OUT OF THE PAST, RKO

NORMAN HOUSTON

Sole Screenplay UNDER THE TONTO RIM, RKO

EDWARD HUEBSCH

Story Basis CIGARETTE GIRL, Col

DOROTHY B. HUGHES

*Contributor to Screenplay Construction and Dialogue, THE CORPSE CAME C.O.D., Col

I

BORIS INGSTER

Joint Story (with John Larkin) CLOAK AND DAGGER, (U. S. Pic.) WB

K

GINA KAUS

Novel Basis HER SISTER'S SECRET, (Henry Brash Prod.) PRC

ROBERT E. KENT

Joint Original Screenplay (with Dorothy Yost) RED STALLION, (Eagle-Lion) PRC
Sole Original Screenplay PHILO VANCE RE-TURNS, (Eagle-Lion) PRC

FREDERICK KOHNER

Joint Original Screenplay (with Albert Mannheimer, Sonya Levien and John Meehan) **THE BIRDS AND THE BEES**, MGM

L**RICHARD H. LANDAU**

Joint Adaptation (with Arch Oboler) **CHRISTMAS EVE**, (Miracle Prod.) UA

RING LARDNER, JR.

Joint Screenplay (with Albert Maltz) **CLOAK AND DAGGER**, (U. S. Pic.) WB

JOHN LARKIN

Joint Story (with Boris Ingster) **CLOAK AND DAGGER**, (U. S. Pic.) WB

CONNIE LEE

Sole Original Screenplay **BLONDIE'S BIG MOMENT**, Col

ROBERT LEES

Joint Screenplay (with John Grant and Frederic I. Rinaldo) **THE BUCK PRIVATES COME HOME**, Uni

ISOBEL LENNART

Sole Screenplay **HOLIDAY IN MEXICO**, MGM
Sole Screenplay **IT HAPPENED IN BROOKLYN**, MGM

SONYA LEVIEN

Joint Original Screenplay (with Albert Mannheimer, Frederick Kohner and John Meehan) **THE BIRDS AND THE BEES**, MGM

HERBERT CLYDE LEWIS

Joint Original Story (with Frederick Stephani) **IT HAPPENED ON FIFTH AVENUE**, (Roy Del Ruth) Allied Artists

LEE LOEB

Sole Screenplay **SEVEN KEYS TO BALDPATE**, RKO

Mc**DORRELL MCGOWAN**

Joint Original Screenplay (with Stuart E. McGowan) **TWILIGHT ON THE RIO GRANDE**, Rep

STUART E. MCGOWAN

Joint Original Screenplay (with Dorrell McGowan) **TWILIGHT ON THE RIO GRANDE**, Rep

M**RICHARD MACAULAY**

Joint Original Story (with Bradford Ropes) **THE BUCK PRIVATES COME HOME**, Uni

LOUELLA MACFARLANE

Joint Screenplay (with Allen Rivkin and Devery Freeman) **THE GUILT OF JANET AMES**, Col

JOEL MALONE

Sole Adaptation **THE PAY-OFF**, (Eagle-Lion) PRC

ALBERT MALTZ

Joint Screenplay (with Ring Lardner, Jr.) **CLOAK AND DAGGER**, (U. S. Pic.) WB

*Academy Bulletin Only

ALBERT MANNHEIMER

Joint Original Screenplay (with Frederick Kohner, Sonya Levien and John Meehan) **THE BIRDS AND THE BEES**, MGM

BEN MARKSON

*Contributor to Dialogue and Special Sequences **IT HAPPENED ON FIFTH AVENUE**, (Roy Del Ruth Prod.) Allied Artists

AL MARTIN

Characters Basis **FOR THE LOVE OF RUSTY**, Col

JOHN MEEHAN

Joint Original Screenplay (with Albert Mannheimer, Frederick Kohner and Sonya Levien) **THE BIRDS AND THE BEES**, MGM

HENRY MORITZ

Sole Screenplay **CIGARETTE GIRL**, Col

N**SLOAN NIBLEY**

Sole Original Screenplay **SPRINGTIME IN THE SIERRAS**, Rep
Sole Screenplay **BELLS OF SAN ANGELO**, Rep

ROBERT G. NORTH

Joint Original Screenplay (with Irving Cummings, Jr.) **DANGEROUS MILLIONS**, (Sol M. Wurtzel) Fox

O**ARCH OBOLER**

Joint Adaptation (with Richard H. Landau) **CHRISTMAS EVE**, (Miracle Prod.) UA

JOHN O'DEA

Additional Dialogue **THE FALL GUY**, Mono

ARTHUR E. ORLOFF

Sole Original Screenplay **WILD COUNTRY**, PRC

P**ARNOLD PHILLIPS**

Joint Screenplay (with Abem Finkel) **TIME OUT OF MIND**, Uni

GEORGE PLYMPTON

Joint Screenplay (with Arthur Dreifuss) **BETTY CO-ED**, Col

LOUIS POLLOCK

Book Basis **STORK BITES MAN**, (Comet Prod.) UA

R**MARTIN RACKIN**

Additional Dialogue **FLIGHT**, RKO

TOM REED

Joint Screenplay (with Jules Furthman) **MOSS ROSE**, Fox

JEAN RENOIR

Joint Screenplay (with Frank Davis) **WOMAN ON THE BEACH**, RKO

EDWARD EARL REPP

Sole Original Screenplay **LONE HAND TEXAN**, Col

GORDON RIGBY

Joint Story Basis (with Carlton Sand) **THE CRIME DOCTOR'S VACATION**, Col

FREDERIC I. RINALDO

Joint Screenplay (with John Grant and Robert Lees) **THE BUCK PRIVATES COME HOME**, Uni

ALLEN RIVKIN

Joint Screenplay (with Louella MacFarlane and Devery Freeman) **THE GUILT OF JANET AMES**, Col

JACK ROBERTS

Sole Screenplay **CHAMPAGNE FOR TWO**, Par (S)

BRADFORD ROPES

Joint Original Story (with Richard Macaulay) **THE BUCK PRIVATES COME HOME**, Uni

ROBERT ROSSEN

Sole Screenplay **DESERT TOWN**, (Hal Wallis) Par

LEO ROSTEN

Sole Screenplay **PERSONAL COLUMN**, (Hunt Stromberg Prods.) UA

S

ARTHUR ST. CLAIR

Joint Screenplay (with Eugene Conrad) **PHILCO VANCE'S GAMBLE**, (Eagle-Lion) PRC

CARLTON SAND

Joint Story Basis (with Gordon Rigby) **THE CRIME DOCTOR'S VACATION**, Col

CHARLES SCHNEE

Sole Screenplay **I WALK ALONE**, (Hal Wallis) Par

RAYMOND SCHROCK

Sole Screenplay **THE CRIME DOCTOR'S VACATION**, Col

BERNARD SCHUBERT

Joint Play Basis (with Mario Silva) **SONG OF LOVE**, MGM

ARTHUR SHEEKMAN

Joint Screenplay (with P. J. Wolfson) **SAIGON**, Par
Joint Screenplay (with Frank Wead) **BLAZE OF NOON**, Par

MARIO SILVA

Joint Play Basis (with Bernard Schubert) **SONG OF LOVE**, MGM

ROBERT SMITH

Joint Adaptation (with John Bright) **I WALK ALONE**, (Hal Wallis) Par

LAURENCE STALLINGS

Sole Screenplay **CHRISTMAS EVE**, (Miracle Prods.) UA

RAMONA STEWART

*Joint Adaptation (with A. I. Bezzerides) and Novel Basis, **DESERT TOWN**, (Hal Wallis) Par

T

FRANK TASHLIN

Joint Original Screenplay (with Edmund Hartmann, Robert Welch, and Monte Price) **VARIETY GIRL**, Par

*Academy Bulletin Only

LAWRENCE TAYLOR

Sole Original Story **PHILO VANCE'S GAMBLE** (Eagle-Lion) PRC
Sole Original Screenplay **PHILO VANCE'S SECRET MISSION** (Eagle-Lion) PRC

IVAN TORS

Joint Screenplay (with Irmgard von Cube, Allen Vincent, and Robert Ardrey) **SONG OF LOVE**, MGM

V

ALLEN VINCENT

Joint Screenplay (with Ivan Tors, Irmgard von Cube, and Robert Ardrey) **SONG OF LOVE**, MGM

IRMGARD VON CUBE

Joint Screenplay (with Ivan Tors, Allen Vincent, and Robert Ardrey) **SONG OF LOVE**, MGM

W

JERRY WARNER

Sole Screenplay **THE FALL GUY**, Mono

FRANK WEAD

Joint Screenplay (with Arthur Sheekman) **BLAZE OF NOON**, Par

ROBERT WELCH

Joint Original Screenplay (with Edmund Hartmann, Frank Tashlin, and Monte Price) **VARIETY GIRL**, Par

AUBREY WISBERG

Joint Screenplay (with George Bricker) **THE PAY-OFF** (Eagle-Lion) PRC

P. J. WOLFSON

Joint Screenplay (with Arthur Sheekman) **SAIGON**, Par

Y

DOROTHY YOST

Joint Original Screenplay (with Robert E. Kent) **RED STALLION**, (Eagle-Lion) PRC

Z

JULIAN ZIMET

Sole Original Story, **SAIGON**, Par

All SWG members are asked to send their new credits to the Guild office. Writers of shorts, in order that their credits may be properly listed, are especially urged to send their credits, with studio verification, to the Guild office. Shorts credits will be listed with a designating letter (S). To expedite shorts credit listing in **THE SCREEN WRITER**, the editorial board has appointed the following committee: George Brandt, chairman (at Jerry Fairbanks); Sol Elkins, (Warner Bros.); Bill Ludwig, (MGM).

the SCREEN WRITER

is now on sale at the following
bookstores and newsstands:

CALIFORNIA:

American Contemporary Gallery, 6772½ Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood 28
Campbell's Book Store, 10918 Le Conte Ave., Westwood Village
Paul Elder & Company, 239 Post Street, San Francisco 8
C. R. Graves — Farmers' Market, 6901 West 3rd St., Los Angeles 36
Hollywood Book Store, 6760 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood 28
Hollywood News Service, Whitley & Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood 28
Lincoln Book Shop, 1721 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood 28
Manuscripts, 1518 W. 12th St., Los Angeles 15
Martindale Book Shop, 9477 Santa Monica Blvd., Beverly Hills
People's Educational Center, 1717 N. Vine St., Hollywood 28
Pickwick Bookshop, 6743 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood 28
Progressive Book Shop, 717 W. 6th St., Los Angeles 14
Universal News Agency, Las Palmas at Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood 28
World News Company, Cahuenga at Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood 28

ILLINOIS:

Post Office News Co., 37 W. Monroe St., Chicago
Paul Romaine — Books, 184 N. La Salle St., Chicago 1

MASSACHUSETTS:

Book Clearing House, 423 Boylston Street, Boston. Mass.

NEW YORK:

Brentano's — Periodical Department, 586 Fifth Ave., New York 19
44th St. Bookfair, 133 W. 44th St., New York 19
Gotham Book Mart, 51 W. 47th St., New York 19
Kamin Dance Bookshop and Gallery, 1365 Sixth Ave., at 56th St., New York 19
Lawrence R. Maxwell — Books, 45 Christopher St., New York 15

PENNSYLVANIA:

Books of the Theatre — R. Rowland Dearden, P. O. Box 245, Jenkintown

CANADA:

Roher's Bookshop, 9 Bloor St., Toronto

IRE:

Eason & Son, Ltd., 79-82 Middle Abbey Street, P. O. Box 42, Dublin

ENGLAND:

Carter's Bookshop, 51 Willesden Lane, London N.W. 6
Literature Kiosk, Unity Theatre, London

OFFICIAL SUBSCRIPTION AGENT FOR GREAT BRITAIN:

Philip Firestein, 82 King Edward's Road, Hackney, London E9, England

OFFICIAL SUBSCRIPTION AGENT FOR SWEDEN AND DENMARK:

Bjorn W. Holmstrom, Lenkert Aktiebolag, Sveavagen 35-37, Stockholm

OFFICIAL SUBSCRIPTION AGENT FOR AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND:

EFG English and Foreign Library and Book Shop, 28 Martin Place, Sydney, N.S.W.

American Authors' Authority Special Supplement

This month The Screen Writer is publishing a special AAA supplement presenting important new developments co-ordinating the American Authors' Authority proposal with the licensing program already approved by the Authors' League.

The supplement is being sent free to all subscribers.

It has been prepared by the SWG Overall AAA Committee consisting of members of all the writing guilds within the Authors' League.

It will undoubtedly be a document of historic importance in the struggle to strengthen literary property rights.

The Screen Writers' Guild is meeting the expense of the special AAA supplement. The Screen Writer, published by the Guild, has carried on the AAA fight to safeguard for every individual writer his most valuable property possession — his copyrights.

It is to the interest of every writer to enlist all possible understanding and support for the AAA.

Send The Screen Writer to your friends. Every new subscriber for the next 30 days will receive a copy of the American Authors' Authority Supplement. Fill out this blank:

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the
**SCREEN
WRITER'S**

**Special Supplement on the
AMERICAN AUTHORS' AUTHORITY**

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AMERICAN AUTHORS' AUTHORITY COMMITTEE OF THE SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD:

EMMET LAVERY (DG) * Chairman

ROBERT ARDREY (DG)	ALBERT HACKETT (DG)
ART ARTHUR	F. HUGH HERBERT (DG) (AG)
EDMUND BELOIN	BORIS INGSTER
ALVAH BESSIE (AG)	RING LARDNER, JR.
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HUGH GRAY	

FOR THE RADIO WRITERS GUILD:

SAM MOORE, National President

AUBREY FINN, Counsel, Western Region

COUNSEL: MORRIS E. COHN, ROBERT MORRIS, JR.

*Letters in parentheses indicate membership in Authors' League of America Guilds other than the Screen Writers' Guild—namely, in the Authors' Guild, the Dramatists' Guild and the Radio Writers Guild.

GORDON KAHN	•	EDITOR OF THE SCREEN WRITER
ROBERT SHAW	•	DIRECTOR OF PUBLICATIONS

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IN MATTERS RELATING TO THEIR ECO-
NOMIC INTERESTS WHERE THE VOICE OF
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This American Authors' Authority edition of The Screen Writer is presented in the hope that it will clarify the issues, and help bring writers together to meet the great issue of safeguarding our individual ownership of and benefits from the material we create.

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MEMORANDUM

SCREEN WRITERS GUILD, INC.

Please note: Special attention is directed to the foreword of this report, the official editorial of the Screen Writers' Guild on page 48 and the questionnaire on page 64.

This is not a report of the Authors' League of America. It is a report to the League from one of the Guilds affiliated with the League.

It is a blue print for one form of licensing, and in the last analysis, only the League and its Guilds can determine whether this or some other form of licensing shall be adopted.

Personal opinion in this, as in other issues of The Screen Writer, reflects the individual opinion of the individual writer. Other writers who may feel like taking issue with any of these opinions are urged to communicate with the editors of The Screen Writer. Full and frank discussion of every feature of this report is welcome and will be featured prominently in future issues of The Screen Writer.

Today, as for many years past, the Screen Writers' Guild stands squarely with the Authors' League of America and its member Guilds. It is our hope that widespread discussion of this report throughout the League will do much to strengthen the basic unity of all members of the League.

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THE CAKE EATERS



But Where Are the Writers' Rights?

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT AAA*

1. *What is the American Authors Authority?*

It is a plan for a non-profit corporation to which writers would assign their copyrights and which would (a) administer the over-all licensing program to which the Authors' League of America is now committed; (b) seek to enforce authors' rights of all kinds, such as the separate property rights arising out of the work or copyright; (c) assist writers by all means available in receiving the equitable administration of laws by courts, bureaus, and other agencies.

2. *Who would establish this corporation?*

The four guilds of the Authors League of America would establish it and the Chairman of the Board would always be the president of the Authors League.

3. *Would it be a kind of trusteeship?*

Yes. It would be, in effect, a repository of copyrights—but with every author's right of withdrawal clearly guaranteed.

4. *Would it be a kind of authors' bank?*

Exactly. Authors would deposit various rights and copyrights with the "bank." Each account would be a personal trust account with the individual writer.

5. *How would the AAA act?*

It would act as trustee to enforce, and to protect, all rights entrusted to its care.

6. *Would it supplant the existing Guilds?*

It would not. The AAA will supplement and extend the work of the existing Guilds. It will carry on where the Guilds currently leave off.

7. *What kind of rights would be assigned to AAA?*

Every kind of right and copyright—including book, club, reprint, abridgement, translation, foreign, serial (1st and 2nd), moving picture, talking picture, radio, television, microfilm.

8. *Could the AAA ever SELL these rights away?*

Never. Both the articles of incorporation, and the form of individual assignment, would limit the power of the trustee. It could license but it could never sell.

9. *Why is ASSIGNMENT of rights necessary?*

Without legal title (as trustee) to rights in question, the AAA would have little standing in the courts or before Congress. It would be no more than an *amicus curiae* and a "friend of the court" is not strong enough to fight some of the battles that confront writers today.

10. *What legal battles confront writers today?*

Improvements in the copyright laws, separation of rights, revision of tax laws, revision of postal laws, protection of civil rights: all on a scale that neither the individual guilds

*These questions and answers are based on the proposed American Authors' Authority by-laws, articles of incorporation and other explanatory material published in this supplement.

nor the Authors League itself is currently prepared to handle.

11. *Is it "safe" for writers to assign their rights?*

Why not? Every day in the week they sell away all their rights to anyone who will pay a lump sum. To assign rights to a trustee of writers, who can only license material, seems much safer and much more desirable.

12. *Wouldn't such a trusteeship be a monopoly?*

It would undoubtedly be accused of being a monopoly—especially by those corporations who are quite close to being a monopoly themselves. But the AAA is clearly no combination in restraint of trade. On the contrary, it is clearly designed to stimulate the flow of literary material.

13. *How would AAA stimulate literary trade?*

By the principle of reversion and separation of rights; it would be impossible for publishers or producers to lump all rights in one contract or to freeze them by non-use. If they didn't use them in a certain period, they would revert to the original author.

14. *Couldn't we do all this without assignment?*

Not very well. Provisional pledges to observe licensing, while desirable, are not enough.

15. *Why not an over-all Minimum Basic Agreement instead?*

Why not indeed? But that will be the last round of the licensing fight, not the first round. Only after several years of writers working together on a licensing program, can we hope for enough overall strength to project a basic agreement binding in all fields.

16. *Don't the dramatists operate without assignment?*

Yes. The Dramatists Guild has licensing without the assignment of rights. But the dramatists are relatively few in num-

ber and so are the producers in the legitimate theatre. Our problems are much more diffuse: our markets are not concentrated in a few areas.

17. *Would AAA apply to all fields of writing?*

Yes. That is why, in the first instance, it would be created by the joint action of the Authors Guild, the Dramatists Guild, the Radio Writers Guild and the Screen Writers Guild.

18. *Is there Authors League precedent for the theory of special corporations for special services?*

Yes. The Dramatists Play Service is one example. The Experimental Theatre, formed by Equity and the Dramatists Guild, is another.

19. *Will the AAA be open only to American authors?*

It will be open to all authors.

20. *Why "American Authors" in its name?*

It will be managed by American authors.

21. *Why the word "Authority"?*

Because it will have the authority to act, within the fields of action approved by the four writing guilds.

22. *Will the AAA own each copyright?*

No. It will hold legal title but this is not ownership. The individual author will still own the property. The AAA is simply a trustee for his benefit.

23. *Can the AAA execute a license without the author's consent?*

No. Absolutely not. The co-signature of the author would be required on each transaction.

24. *Could a writer withdraw his copyright?*

Yes. On proper notice provided for in the by-laws.

25. *Who can use the AAA's services?*

Any author, who will pay the nominal service charge. He does not have to be a member of the Authors League or any of its guilds.

26. *Could material be marketed without AAA?*

Yes. The AAA is a voluntary enterprise. If it benefits writers, they will use it. If not, it will disappear.

27. *Will the AAA replace agents?*

No, it will not seek licenses, develop deals, or do the other usual work of a literary agent.

28. *Will the AAA keep records?*

Yes. It will maintain for the author a complete record of all transactions concerning his work. For the first time there would be one central place, where he could see at a glance the exact status of all his rights and copyrights.

29. *What about material not covered by copyright?*

That will be serviced too. If a writer can not, under present laws, claim copyright—he can still assign such rights as he has, and enjoy the same benefits as assignors of copyrightable material.

30. *Will the AAA have any control of the content of material assigned to it?*

No. The AAA is not concerned with the idea content of material assigned to it—except that it will not knowingly accept slanderous or obscene material.

31. *What guarantee is there against control of content?*

Specific limitations imposed in the by-laws and in the articles of incorporation.

32. *Haven't writers organizations in the past tried to influence what writers wrote?*

They may have tried but it is doubtful if they got very far. A few, here and there, may have tried to influence what a writer *thought* but it is a fine question whether very many ever were able to affect what he wrote.

33. *Has the Authors League ever dictated story content?*

Certainly not. Neither the

League nor its four guilds. What a member of the League or its guilds chooses to put into a script is and always has been his own affair.

34. *Will the AAA determine who gets a given lease and what should be paid for it?*

No. The individual writer will make his own deals through his own agent as now. The AAA will simply keep the bidding open and make sure all rules are observed—some-what like the film arbiter in the Dramatists Guild.

35. *Who will actually run the AAA?*

A Board of 17 governors: four elected by each of the four Guilds plus the president of the Authors League.

36. *Isn't this a considerable concentration of power?*

Yes, it is.

37. *More power than the Authors League has now?*

The Authors League has very little power. Power is the capacity to act and the League has very little capacity to act. Most of the activity in the League begins and ends with the guilds but no one of them is strong enough to administer licensing alone.

38. *Isn't this mere logic-chopping?*

Not at all. The League is like a man who, in the absence of his four sons, faces a lion alone. He can reason with the lion but he has no power to act. He can point out that, in the end, eating men is very bad for lions, he can suggest that a conference be held—to be attended by three lions, three men and one disinterested party. But if the lion is not inclined to reason, there is nothing the man can do—except hope that some day his sons will find a way to put a nice Springfield rifle in his hands.

39. *Are we facing lions?*

No, but we do face vested in-

terests with little or no protection—interests which turn a very formidable weapon against us.

40. *What weapon is turned against us?*

Our own properties. Radio companies, claiming all rights for the life of a copyright, broadcast and re-broadcast. The writer is not cut in for the re-use of his material and other writers are deprived of the opportunity to create new material. Ditto for picture companies and book publishers, also magazine publishers.

41. *What weapon would we have in AAA?*

If we had one trustee, in whom were vested the major rights and the major copyrights, it would be writers who made the deals—and not the corporations. We'd have something to face the lion with—besides arguments.

42. *Is it fair for WRITERS to claim such power?*

Is it fair for someone else to claim it? This theory is squarely in harmony with the general principles of American law and English common law — "to every cow her calf."

43. *How about the Sherman Anti-Trust Act?*

We are not out to restrain trade. We are out to promote literary trade. By the principle of reversion of copyright and separation of rights, we rescue properties from the "deep freeze" in which the current system places them.

44. *What changes in laws would AAA fight for?*

For free copyright, for the right of copyright to begin with creation rather than publication, for more equitable treatment under the tax laws, for second class postage rates for manuscripts.

45. *Is there any precedent for assignment of rights?*

Yes, Members of the American

Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), assign the performing rights of their compositions to the Society. With these assignments, ASCAP is able to collect from radio stations, night clubs, theatres and restaurants for music used.

46. *Why did ASCAP operate on assignment?*

Until 1913, when ASCAP was founded, no rights were assigned to any central body. The result was that Victor Herbert and others, in spite of numerous legal battles, had no luck in collecting money for music used. After 1913, when assignment was in effect, the situation changed. Case after case was won.

47. *What about writers who are not members of any Guild? Will they be given a voice in running the AAA?*

They are like bank depositors who are not stockholders of the bank. They are entitled to the services of the AAA; but they have no voice in running it unless they join one of the guilds. But note, *there is a guild for every kind of professional writing done in the United States today.*

48. *Will the AAA invade the province of the Guilds?*

Not at all. Decisions concerning minimums, collective bargaining for writers under salary, inter-guild affairs, and other traditional work of the guilds will continue to be the exclusive province of the guilds themselves.

49. *Will the AAA compete with the Authors League?*

No. The AAA is subordinate to the League and is merely the means by which the League, through its guilds, carries on the function of repository, licensing trustee, and the other work here outlined.

50. *What about equality of representation among the Guilds?*

This is the purpose behind the

proposed structure of AAA, and so far as human ingenuity can contrive, this has been accomplished. Every guild is guaranteed equal representation on the board and in the executive committee.

51. *What "authority" does the AAA exercise?*

None of its own. It is the instrument of the guilds. It has absolutely no authority over any writer or over any guild.

52. *It will take money to run the AAA. Where will it come from?*

The writer will pay a small charge on depositing his work. An additional fee will be paid to the AAA for every transaction relating to his work, computed upon the money paid to the writer. Whether this will come from the writer or the purchaser is not yet determined. In any event a fraction of a per cent will probably be

sufficient. *No profit to the AAA is contemplated.*

53. *What other forms of licensing are there?*

We don't know. So far as we have heard, this is the only detailed plan that has yet been submitted to the Authors League.

54. *Will this be the final structure of AAA?*

That depends on the League and the four guilds. Naturally, the more the plan is studied, the more it will be possible to improve it.

55. *If the final plan isn't AAA, what is it?*

Frankly, we don't know. We're willing to be shown. If it isn't AAA, then it has to be something even better—and even stronger. But our hunch is that AAA is the only answer.



CO-ORDINATING WRITERS' RIGHTS

Will AAA function like the Film Negotiator in the Dramatists Guild and like the Negotiator that has been proposed for the Authors' Guild? If so, just what will it achieve that these two Guilds cannot currently achieve for themselves?

The AAA will function very much like the Negotiator in the Dramatists' Guild and like the Negotiator proposed for the Authors' Guild but on a scale that neither of these two Guilds could achieve for themselves in these fields or in the other fields of writing.

The Negotiator for the Dramatists' Guild and the one proposed for the Authors' Guild are steps in the right direction but they do not cover the fields of television, ra-

dio, and a large part of the motion picture fields.

The AAA is designed to carry on where the present Guilds leave off, to operate as an over-all umpire-in-chief in all fields, and with a centralized bureau of records which none of the individual guilds is prepared either to collate or to administer alone.

No matter how well the Negotiator may function for the present in individual fields, it is obvious that the authors of America would be much better off with over-all negotiation in all fields as proposed above.

In effect we are proposing, among other services of the Authority, a truly League Negotiator (the Authority) to operate in all fields.

ARGUMENT AGAINST THE AAA

By LOUIS BROMFIELD

I READ the Cain plan carefully and gave it plenty of consideration and came to the conclusion that it was not for me and that its possibilities for evil were much greater on the whole than its possibilities for good. There are two principle reasons for this.

(1) The surrender of copyrights.

(2) The inherent possibility of boycott and control.

As to the surrender of copyright, I regard copyright simply as a property, like the title to my farm which I would be equally unwilling to surrender to any group of farmers even though I was included in a dominant capacity in that group. I think it should not be overlooked that a copyright in the wider sense (of foreign rights, serial rights, reprint rights, etc.) is of less importance to a writer whose principal income is from screen writing than to one to whom screen rights are largely a minor portion of income from a copyright.

Or perhaps we might say that the copyright becomes more important to the screen writer because by far the largest portion of his income is derived from that source and that, largely speaking, he is up against a formidable fairly closed group of purchasers or employers.

I do not underestimate the value of the plan from the screen writer's point of view and insofar as it concerns film writing, I would approve, but I resent the implication that *all* writers work on the same basis as the screen writer and that they should be invited and, by implication, be coerced into joining the plan. I think you will find that is the universal reaction of every writer whose principal source of income is not screen writing.

I am, perhaps, exaggeratedly, a lone wolf and an individualist. That was one of the principle reasons for my taking an active part in the fight against Franco and Fascism generally. I just

LOUIS BROMFIELD is a distinguished novelist and a member of the American Writers Association organized to oppose the American Authors' Authority plan. He wrote this article in the form of a letter. He refers of course to the original AAA plan as presented in July, 1946.

happen to be that way and to believe that any restrictions beyond those already established by the Authors' League are harmful to freedom of expression in general and to the individual writer in particular.

I do not overlook the fact that if writers had an organization like the Musicians Union we should be able to squeeze the ultimate out of everyone but the question is not altogether one of money. I should prefer to give up writing altogether than to place myself in the position of the average musician, whose right to individual activity is *entirely* under the thumb of Petrillo who can, if he chooses, bar any musician from earning his livelihood.

It seems to me that solutions for many of the stated grievances of proposed plan are already in the making, particularly the licensing of rights to books or stories rather than outright sale. It is merely a question of time and perhaps of the employment of a good agent before this objective is realized. I have already put myself on record in writing as willing to withdraw all reprint rights if the author's share of returns is not increased. This is in relation to the fight undertaken by the Authors' League.

I also resent being forced into a tight organization and the sur-

render of copyright in order to help writers who should either have the intelligence or take the trouble to protect their own rights or have the good sense to employ an agent who will do so. As a part of this same thesis, I resent being included in problems which concern the screen writer primarily and concern me and many others like me only slightly if at all.

It seems to me that the Screen Writers Guild and the Authors' League both possess the machinery and the money to protect or increase the rights and gains in question and that they have as much power, from the writers point of view, as is necessary to do so. If they do not accomplish these ends, it is not because they are not in a position to do so. I have long paid dues to the Authors' League and at times substantial amounts to the Screen Writers Guild and have always considered the payment a good investment and would be perfectly willing to pay more. In one sense at least I do not consider the increased powers over copyright and writer's rights generally, entirely necessary if the various organizations used at all times the powers and opportunities which they already possess. If it is necessary for them to spend more money in support of a member's particular care or for the general extension of his

rights, by all means give it to them.

You say that the plan for A.A.A. specifically excludes the possibility of controlling the content of material written. I do not find this so. The prospectus declares that this is not its purpose but the machinery is all established by which it could be done and done very effectively through boycott and other means of black-jacking. The possibility depends entirely upon the purpose and character of those in control of the organization.

And in this connection it would be silly not to say that many writers mistrust the beliefs and actions of those in control of the Screen Writers Guild and of a group which seeks from time to time to dominate the Authors' League. I am unwilling to put myself in a position where I should have to give a great deal of time, (which I do not have) to fighting political and ideological battles within the ranks of A.A.A. or any writers organization in order to protect my own rights to freedom of speech and of action.

I might add that there are many other issues intricately involved, among them the (to me) obvious fact that there are already too many organized pressure minorities lobbying and fighting exclusively for their own selfish rights. This goes for

the Farm Bloc, the Musicians Union, the National Manufacturers Association, the C.I.O. and countless other groups. And I don't believe that all literary properties are on the same level, either from the point of view of commercial value or of literary quality and I resent any organized attempt to treat them as such. We have, God knows, enough mediocrity in the world today and enough pressure to reduce everything and everybody to a common denominator (something which is impossible to do in any case by the very facts of natural laws.)

Please believe that I do not fail to understand the pressures in Hollywood which bring about the resentments and the efforts to correct wrongs which exist. When I am in Hollywood I grow more and more resentful and revolutionary. But these pressures and wrongs do not touch most writers and consequently they are unwilling to surrender certain rights in order to correct by pressure injustices which largely concern the members of the Screen Writers Guild alone. I can understand perfectly the desire of the Guild to enlist *all* writers in order to increase the pressure but I do not believe that the great majority of other writers will be willing to sacrifice rights in order to win the Hollywood battle, nor do I honestly

believe that they should be asked or coerced to do so.

The parallel you quote between the proposed A.A.A. and ASCAP is not, in my opinion, valid. It is extremely difficult to put ideology or thought or opinion into musical notation. As for the lyric side, I doubt extremely that any song lyric given over to ideology or opinion or even to thought would ever produce any result other than to kill any song and make it unnecessary for the writer even to concern himself about protecting his rights through ASCAP.

Quite frankly, I do not believe that A.A.A. is the only way for a writer to secure greater monetary returns for his work and quite frankly I know a good many writers who have a very exaggerated idea not only of the value of these rights but also of the value of the work itself. This is obviously something which only the public can determine in purely commercial terms which seems to be the only basis upon which A.A.A. sets up its argument.

Forgive the length of this let-

ter but I wanted you to understand my point of view, which I believe represents that of most writers whose principal source of income is *not* from screen writing. I have written very frankly and honestly. The letter is in no sense personal and I would be glad to have it submitted to the committee in question. I feel that most of us would give up much more than we should gain and in what we gain, we should be giving up things which cannot be measured in terms of money. While the prospectus denies this, the possibility is there and very strongly there. Please believe that if larger principles were not involved and it were only a question of joining battle in the defense of *all* rights of writers, I would be the first to join you. All writers are not subject to the pressures from which screen writers undeniably suffer and rightly resent. I am simply unwilling to prejudice the right of absolute freedom of expression which I possess by any control or even by the remotest possibility of control. Submit another pattern and I will be the first to join you.

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RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

By JAMES M. CAIN

THE proposal for an American Authors' Authority, first made in *The Screen Writer* last July, was greeted by such abuse, appearing in publications from Bangor to San Diego, and from Spokane to Miami, as has rarely passed through the United States mails.

For some of this, we who had worked up the plan were partly prepared. From the *Hollywood Reporter*, for example, we didn't exactly expect warm, sympathetic understanding. But its attitude, whatever it would be, didn't cause us much apprehension. With it, by that time, we had shaken down to a comfortable, year-in-year-out feud, with its publisher, old Devil Anse Wilkerson, running a wonderful restaurant for us to eat our meals in, and giving a research service, whose findings were published almost daily, that we found most helpful in connection with the subtler aspects of the plan; and we on our side reading his paper and deriving some profit from such alert scouts as Hoffman.

But that the thing should ramify beyond the trade publications; that it should spread into the daily press and magazines of general circulation; that such publications as the *Saturday Review of Literature* and the *Los Angeles Daily News*, bearing high reputations for liberalism, should pitch into us with such false, silly, and incomprehensible allegations — this, it may as well be admitted at once, caught us wholly by surprise. Indeed, not to take too much space hemming and hawing about it, it knocked us over as though it had been a tornado, which it somewhat resembled.

But when we got our breath and stuck our heads out and had a look at this twister, it seemed to us it had a curious shape, something like a bag with a cat wriggling inside of it. And when we had read and digested these thousands of articles, columns, and editorials,* we were forced

*See symposium of adverse press comments on Page 50

JAMES M. CAIN, well-known American novelist, led in the formulation of the original AAA proposal and has been active in the work of the SWG Overall AAA Committee presenting the plan in this modified form which seeks to meet all reasonable objections and at the same time to retain its basic benefits for writers.

to conclude that while the American press, at its self-chosen task of reporting man-bites-dog, might, under ordinary circumstances, achieve brilliant accuracy, with all names properly spelled and the SPCA correctly quoted, the ordinary circumstances must absolutely not include the man's being a publisher. In this unlikely but highly possible circumstance, the probability, we think, on the basis of what was written by us, is that the American press will then represent the dog as a vicious, Stalin-loving, secret-toting, party-lining Commie, who only took the shape of a dog, using his Flash Satan transformer plate for the purpose, and stuck his tail in the man's mouth (at the very moment when the photographers were setting off their beelzebulbs), for the sole purpose of discrediting publishers, and make it appear they are men who go about eating snips and snails and puppy dogs' tails for the pure, degenerate delight they get out of it.

For the gimmick in this stew was copyright, and copyright affects publishers, none more directly than the publishers of periodicals; and if it was somewhat naive of us to suppose that the American editor, usually so ready to lend bluff, sensible support to things of a progressive kind, would be fair to a proposal

that involved the interests of his employers, we can only say that the result, while unexpected, certainly did throw light into places not hitherto lighted. We knew, as the saying goes, where we stood.

It was a bit of a blow, for some of us had come up through the American press, and had somewhat romantic convictions about its ideals. These, to be sure, need not be wholly abandoned. On quiet, everyday topics, like control of the bomb, our periodicals will still, we feel sure, render a high public service. But on the case in point we would like to warn our membership, and all writers producing material of the kind the Authority would take an interest in, that the American press has been grossly unfair, and may be expected to continue its initial attitude. It depends, somewhat, on whose bunion is under the brick.

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We were also surprised by the action of a small group of writers, calling themselves the American Writers' Association, in organizing, with office, staff, and printed bulletin, for the sole purpose of preventing us from carrying our plan into effect. We had expected, naturally, some skepticism on the part of writers, a great deal of prudence, a tendency to go slow about something that was in large part new;

indeed, it was in order that writers could meditate the matter that we issued our prospectus, even though none knew better than ourselves that the thing was barely past the embryo stage, and would need a vast amount of work before it could in any way be called ready. But that writers would go beyond their undisputed prerogative of steering clear of us, of going their way without signing up, and dare say we might not launch our plan; that they should openly agitate and combine and seek allies to make it impossible for us to do what we had a perfect legal, moral, and literary right to do — this had not entered our minds. It gave us, we confess, some very bad nights.

For on the roster of this organization were writers whose integrity we could in no way doubt, and their reasons for opposing the plan, if they didn't justify their joining the AWA, were plain, simple reasons of a wholly disquieting kind.

Copyright, said many of them, was the writer's most sacred possession, something to be treasured and kept and owned; that he should ever part with it, by assignment to an Authority or otherwise, was simply unthinkable.

Now to us, this was mainly moonshine, something that sounds profound and isn't. For as things stand at present, copy-

right is no sacred, treasured possession at all, unless it covers a quiet little item that nobody wants for a serial, a movie, a broadcast, or a play, in which case it is somewhat moot how valuable it is.

If it has any real value, it is dismembered at once like a broiling chicken, and if at the end of a year the writer possesses any part of it he will be lucky indeed — Hollywood will have the picture, radio, and television rights; Philadelphia the first and second serial rights; New York the book, club, reprint, foreign, and translation rights, so that what part of this sacred, treasured thing he will still be clutching to his bosom we don't exactly see. But that was the way they felt about it, and even allowing that many admirable people, in the name of the flag, will lend their names to an organization like the AWA without going into the thing as thoroughly as they might, we still did some worrying as to whether it was ourselves that was crazy.

However, it wasn't long before certain aspects of the AWA began to obtrude themselves on our consciousness in such fashion that we felt we would be fools to pay no attention to them, or in the light of them to credit the inner sanctum of this organization with too much idealism.

It might not be, as one news-

paper said, a fascist front, but there was no getting away from it that some of its more vocal members had got themselves nice little reputations over a period of some years, as militant reactionaries, meaning as stooges for corporate interests. And in case there are those who have been upset by the campaign that has been conducted by these worthies, we have to say that in our belief they are simply a front, a company union, for their friends the big eastern book, newspaper, and magazine publishers, the western picture producers, and the radio users all over; and that anything they say, before general weight can be attached to it, must be examined first in the light of this scarcely concealed affiliation.

Mr. Rupert Hughes, indeed, attempts no concealment, and practically admits it. Addressing the Hollywood branch of the Authors' Guild on the invitation of those in favor of the Authority idea, he began with a pleasant little lecture on the subject of copyright, greatly startling some of those present, as it was obvious he was confusing the copyright with the registration, an error comparable to diapering the birth certificate instead of the baby. Then, while dozens of young writers stared in amazement, he went on to call a roster of high officials of the picture

companies, and said he would have no hesitancy in entrusting his copyrights to these fine men, but when it came to irresponsible, wacky, crackpot writers who would naturally direct the Authority, the idea was horrendous to him.

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Now passing over the point that these picture producers, while no doubt estimable men, have made not the slightest move to return to him the copyrights, or parts of copyrights, that he *did* entrust to them, in his picture-making days, when much smaller sums were paid than are paid at present, it cannot be blinked that a man who talks like this is not speaking for writers, but merely pretending to. Mr. Hughes, allowing for his wit, his charm, his erudition, his high personal qualities, is in this matter simply an idolater of great power and great wealth, and to take him seriously, as though he were concerned over what is good for writers, is simply to be silly.

The same can be said for his colleagues of a similar temperament. The same, to be sure, cannot be said for Miss Dorothy Thompson, who has formed a strange alliance with this improbable crew; but Miss Thompson is somewhat hipped on the

subject of Dr. Goebbels and his methods, and the fact that he once organized German writers into a Bund that regimented them seems to be a point she cannot get past.

Tabulating our opposition, we found, in spite of its noisiness, no great reason to be upset. It consisted, first of all, of several hundred columnists, editorial writers, and reporters, not one of whom, so far as we could make out, had ever produced one exploitable copyright, and all of whom, beyond any shadow of doubt, were bent on pleasing their employers, who had a direct interest in the subject, not always the same as our interest.

It consisted, next, of professional libertarians, such as Miss Thompson and Oswald Garrison Villard, who must be suspected now and then of mistaking the appearance for the reality and shouting their lines on cue rather than reflection.

It consisted, next, of those writers, noted above, who have made association with corporate power an avocation in their lives. And it consisted, finally of perfectly sincere writers of many different kinds, who were honestly dubious about a plan of undeniably novel aspect, but who gave no signs of knowing a great deal about copyright.

It was this quality of the opposition, that the louder it scream-

ed the less it seemed to know about the subject it presumed to discuss, that began presently to stiffen our attitude, and give us confidence that we were not so crazy after all, but quite probably on the right track. For when, now and then, some critic did know what he was talking about, there was considerable willingness to concede cogency to our idea, and to admit that copyright lay much closer to the center of the question than any writer had hitherto suspected.

Mr. Edwin Claude Mills, for example, writing in *New York Variety*, conceded that the abuses that writers suffer from are many, that copyright is of prime importance, that something must be done, and that assignment of the performing rights under musical copyright is the foundation stone of the strength of ASCAP. Mr. Mills recalled that there was in ASCAP tremendous opposition to the idea of assignment of any kind of right to this kind of organization, opposition similar to that which the Authority is encountering at present.

The point is that Mr. Mills has for many years been a representative of musical associations, and once was chairman of ASCAP's executive board, surely a career to qualify him as an authority in the field. About the only major points on which he differs with us at all are whether

the discussion shouldn't proceed in a calmer manner, a desideratum we could hope for too, though we really don't see how one attacks a vested interest and meets a calm reception; and whether the Authors' League is not capable of handling whatever needs to be done.

It has, he says, "a long and honorable history of endeavor to improve the situation of the writing profession as a whole and of writers as individuals," a compliment in which we concur, but with an amendment. The League has a long and honorable history of endeavor to improve the situation of the writing profession, so long as that profession has been conceived as made up of merchants with wares for sale, or of workmen with services for sale, and as long as its function has been conceived as the disseminator of useful information and the promoter of opportunities.

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Conceived as the representative of the creators of properties it has no record at all, honorable or otherwise, for it has not once bestirred itself on a property matter, whether of copyright infringement, prosecution for indecency, or the possibility of better legislation in Congress. The nearest it has come to such activity is a sporadic effort to

get passed a new copyright law, such as the Shotwell Act, and an appearance *amicus curiae* in an occasional case at law.

In both of these directions it has failed, and it is permissible, it seems to us, to wonder whether its failure is not related to its defective mode of organization. It is rent, at the moment, with factional disputes, and there are many who indulge in a furious foot-stamping and vociferate loud demands that it "do something," though how, under its present set-up, it can do much about what these rebellious members demand is not so easy to see. It is our desire to strengthen it, to put reinforcement in the concrete, so it will be equal to its task, and not crumble and crack at the least sign of strain.

And apart from all opposition, and its integrity or lack of it or its cogency or lack of it or its information or lack of it, there was the tremendous support we got, the avalanche of letters from writers all over the world, in England, in Canada, in France, who gave their unqualified indorsement of what we were trying to do, and promised to back us to the limit of their abilities. And there was the meeting that was held, when one of us went to New York to explain the plan to a group there that was curious about it.

Confronted with a sudden

change in the arrangements, he took the grand ballroom of one of the hotels, sight unseen, in order to be able to make his announcements without further delay. Arriving there to speak, he was somewhat appalled at the size of it, and concerned that his small gathering, as he thought, would be quite lost in it. Before the chairman called for order he wondered if it would be big enough. Six hundred writers turned out that night, said to be the largest number of them ever assembled at one spot in the history of literature.

Not all of them, naturally, were prepared to accept the authority on the basis of one speech and no reflection, but the excitement was there, the electrical feeling that reflected the belief that here at last might be what the writer needs to lead him out of the wilderness that now holds him, lost, confused, and inhibited. This meeting, we knew, was a ground swell, no ripple to run its course and disappear. It would be followed by others, and could not be disregarded.

And if mass support was visible, brilliant individual support was there too, as for example when Miss Taylor Caldwell, in a slashing interview in the Buffalo Evening News, (see pages 27 and 28) blasted the things that had been said about us, and indorsed everything we were

trying to do. She is not Hollywood, she is not Communist, she is not Fascist. But she is enormously successful, she is the owner of valuable copyrights, she is the potential producer of many more.

Of Mr. Theodore Pratt, whose article in *Variety* is reprinted on page 55, similar things could be said. And if all this outpouring on our side were not enough, there is the inescapable fact that the writer's plight is just as bad as it ever was, and nobody else has any idea what can be done about it.

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The copyright law is what it was when it was passed in 1909, and the writer may not claim copyright until somebody else does it for him. He is therefore at the mercy of unprincipled publishers, and what is worse, ignorant printers. Only a few days ago one of us received the recently published history of his army division, a monumental labor involving the collation of mountains of reports, orders, and operation maps. It claimed copyright, with all rights reserved, but this fine, brave rub-a-dub-dub is on the last page of the book, instead of the page prescribed by law, and so copyright is lost and this creative achievement belongs to anybody who wants to steal it.

Book publishers still "take" the six literary rights: book, club, reprint, abridgement, foreign, and translation, and the writer never makes his own deals in these fields.

Magazines still refuse multiple submission, and take second serial rights as well as first, usually with the intimation they will be returned, which invariably they are not.

Moving picture companies, with the exception of an occasional independent like the King Bros., still insist on outright sale of the rights that involve them.

Radio companies have hardly begun to consider whether writers have any rights at all. And the tax regulations are still fantastic.

Regardless of whether we are on the right track or not, there can be no doubt we have hit on the right time. The cry of writers all over the country, the appearance of committees, branches, chapters, special organizations of writers, the desperate pleas on all sides that something be done, all testify to the plight our craft has fallen into. We believe our plan is soundly conceived, and we believe if we keep our courage up, if we keep fighting now when flashes of light appear through the murk, if we do not permit ourselves to be talked out of what we want to do either by enemies whose motives are not

what they profess to be, or by friends who know nothing about what they discuss so glibly, that we can win through, and place the four guilds, and perhaps other guilds that the future may qualify for membership, in a position where they can really do something for the writer, instead of next to nothing as at present.

For let us make no mistake about it, and deceive ourselves in no way, next to nothing is what is being done for him as things stand now. Quite a lot of talk has gone around about the Authors' League's "system" for replacing sale with lease, and for bringing about "separation of rights," meaning disposition of one right at a time, instead of rights in parcel lots; indeed, an "interim" report has been put out that intimates there is such a system, and that work is being done on it.

No such system exists. Under pressure of the western guilds, the board of the League accepted the principle of lease instead of sale, but so far as devising any machinery to enforce it is concerned, no progress has been made of any kind, beyond a proposal that we all "pledge" ourselves not to sell anything outright from now on.

In other words, lease, which is only a small part of what we hope to do with the Authority, but which is the only aspect of

the plan which the League seems willing to debate, is purely a project in cat-belling, at this time. To achieve it, we think our idea, which envisages the handling of writers' problems as a whole, so that one phase of literature helps another phase of literature, may work. We can't promise that it will, but we think it could. We don't believe that the writer's organizations, as they are at present constituted, can.

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For one thing, we think it most likely that what the Authors' League, in 35 years of continuous existence, has not done, and hasn't even seen fit to attempt, it cannot do. For another thing, we think its basic strategy, approach to problems, and basic thought need radical overhauling. Its method has been frequently elucidated by various spokesmen, as follows:

"Don't bang away with both barrels at the whole flock, for experience shows that that way you'll never hit anything. Pick out one bird, aim, fire, and bring it down. Then pick out another bird."

With all due respect, we think this is an excellent manual of tactics for shooting birds. Unfortunately, however, we are belling cats. And it seems to us,

since these cats eat properties, and must have properties if they are to live, that properties are the key to dealing with them. We think, if we put our literary properties into a cage, and make it difficult for them to get literary properties anywhere else, that eventually they'll get hungry enough to go in there where anybody could tie a bell on them. But we think a "full-time" tough mug, as he was described in the original prospectus, would make a better job of the bell than amateurs, and that pugnacity would help more than a calm, reasonable disposition.

Quite a lot has been made of this mug, and our critics have dangled the possibility that a Petrillo might take over American letters before the eyes of a horrified nation as possibly the



Squatters' Rights

worst calamity that could afflict it.

We can think of a number of things we could say to this, but let Petrillo pass. Let us choose, as a focal point for discussion, another full-time, tough mug, the sainted Rockne. At the time the Authors' League was founded Rock was still in college, and the high-pressure, work-at-it-all-year-round, raid-the-high-schools, character-building coach had not been heard of yet. Yale would bring back some old grad like T. A. D. Jones, who smilingly took off from business and coached the boys for a season, but mostly, in outlying places, the team was coached by a professor inclined to sport, in his spare time as soon as he marked up the English themes, and if the boys gave him a gold watch after the final game he thought himself amply rewarded, and if anybody had suggested that the college pay him then the ugly head of professionalism would have been regarded as rearing itself up.

Well, it seems to us we are

still in the year 1912. We still have no Rockne who gets paid a big salary and works at his job from January to December. Our guilds have "executive secretaries," but there is hardly such an optimist as would feel that any of them could crack down on a Congressman who was dilatory about the copyright act, or fair taxation, or who could take a case to court, or swim in the troubled waters where the real current flows.

Perhaps we are crass, incapable of the high, delicate feelings of some of our opponents, but we want a professional coach. We want ringers in the backfield. We want a drop-kicking, forward-passing, swivel-hipping guy at quarterback, and we want fast ends that have been raided out of the best high schools there are.

In other words, we want a team. And we think it is only through an American Authors' Authority, or something so like it there would be a distinction without a difference, that a team can be trained.

AAA CONCERNS PROPERTY RIGHTS ONLY

Would AAA affect the present employment situation in which writers, in various fields, are hired to adapt the work of other writers?

No. The AAA concerns itself with the leasing and the licensing

of original material as it comes directly from the typewriters of individual authors. The individual guilds would still administer the employment situation of writers hired to adapt the work of other writers.

Proposed
Articles Of Incorporation
of
THE AMERICAN
AUTHORS' AUTHORITY
OF THE AUTHORS'
LEAGUE OF AMERICA
A Non-Profit Corporation

WE, the undersigned, have voluntarily associated for the purpose of forming a corporation under the non-profit corporation laws of the State of, and we hereby certify:

NAME

FIRST: The name of this corporation is THE AMERICAN AUTHORS' AUTHORITY of the Authors' League of America.

NON PROFIT

SECOND: That this corporation does not contemplate pecuniary gain or profit to the members thereof.

PURPOSE AND
POWERS

THIRD: That the purposes of this corporation are:

PROMOTE USE
IN ALL WE DO

1. To promote and encourage commerce in interests in literary properties, and the unrestricted flow of, and commerce in, books, periodicals, pamphlets, recordings, motion picture films, printed matter, and any and all forms by which communication can be captured, held and transmitted, whether now in existence or whether hereafter invented or developed, and any and all writings, compositions and literary creations which are or which may hereafter become subjects of property or ownership.

COPYRIGHT
AND LITERARY
PROPERTY

**PROTECT
WRITERS'
INTERESTS**

2. To further and to protect the proprietary interests of the creator of any and all forms of literary property, and of composite works of literature together with other creative work.

**AS TRUSTEES
FOR CREATORS**

3. To hold in trust for the creators the copyright, or subsidiary rights under the copyright, title, and all forms of interest and ownership in, literary properties of all kinds, and to assign, deal in, transfer, dispose of, license, lease, and grant interests and rights of all kinds in such properties.

**SUE AND
DEFEND ON
BEHALF OF
WRITERS**

4. To act as trustee, representative, or in any other capacity on behalf of creators of literary properties and owners of interests therein, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, to take all lawful steps to preserve, enforce, and protect rights arising out of, or under, copyright, title, or other interests in literary properties, to sue, defend, arbitrate, enter into contracts, give quittances and releases.

**FORMAL
POWERS**

5. To collect, receive, and disburse monies and other assets and all forms of evidences of obligations to, and of this corporation and to, and of, its principal or beneficiary.

**RESEARCH,
COMMERCIAL
PRACTICES,
TAXES, ETC.**

6. To further research concerning, and to advocate and encourage, legislation, rules, regulations, practices of governmental agencies, and practices of businesses or industries dealing in or consuming interests in literary properties, for the purpose of furthering and increasing the economic benefits of the creators of literary properties, including, but not by way of limitation, the more equitable taxation without adverse discrimination of the proceeds of literary properties and including the increasing benefits from copyright and other rights and privileges of such creators.

*INTERNA-
TIONAL
PROTECTION*

7. To promote and encourage the protection of the proprietary interests of creators, of whatever nationality, in countries and nations foreign to that of the creator or owner, and to promote international commerce in literary properties under laws, treaties, compacts, and conventions securing for the creator or owner more complete economic protection and benefit of their properties.

*MORAL
RIGHTS*

8. To establish, further, and protect the moral rights of authors, composers, and creators of literary properties and of other properties of a related nature, and to promote the more thorough recognition and appreciation of creators of literary properties.

*NO
DISCRIMI-
NATION*

9. To make available, subject to the laws of the land, the services, privileges, and benefits of the authority without discrimination by reason of the content of the property submitted, and without regard to the race, color, creed, political or organizational affiliation of the creator or owner thereof. This subsection may not be amended, except to enlarge the right of any and all persons who enjoy the services and privileges of this corporation for any and all of their works.

*TO OWN
ALL FORMS
OF
PROPERTY*

10. To acquire, by lease, purchase, contract, concession, or otherwise, and to own, develop, explore, exploit, improve, operate, lease, enjoy, control, manage, or otherwise turn to account, mortgage, grant, sell, exchange, convey, or otherwise dispose of, in any country, state, or locality, any and all real estate, lands, options, concessions, grants, land patents, franchises, rights, privileges, easements, tenements, estates, hereditaments, interests, and properties of every description and nature, whatsoever, which the corporation may deem wise

and proper in connection with the conduct of any business or businesses enumerated in these articles of incorporation.

**TO
BORROW
MONEY**

11. To borrow money and, from time to time, to make, accept, endorse, execute and issue bonds, debentures, promissory notes, bills of exchange, and other obligations of the corporation, and to secure the payment of any such obligations by mortgage, pledge, deed, indenture, agreement, or other instrument in trust, or by other lien upon, assumption of, or agreement in regard to any and all of the real or personal property, interests, rights, franchises, or privileges of the corporation wherever situated whether now owned or hereafter acquired; and to sell or otherwise dispose of any or all of such bonds, debentures, or obligations in such manner and upon such terms as may be deemed judicious.

GUARANTOR

12. To make any guarantee respecting stocks, dividends, securities, indebtedness, interest, contracts, performance, or other obligations of any person, firm, association, trust, or corporation, so far as the same may be permitted to be done under the laws of the State of

**INTER-
NATIONAL
SCOPE**

13. To conduct its business, and to exercise each and all of its powers, both within the State of and in any part of the world, except where otherwise provided to the contrary by law.

**OMNIBUS
CLAUSE**

14. To do everything necessary and proper for the accomplishment of the objects herein enumerated, or necessary or incidental to the protection and benefit of the corporation.

**HEAD-
QUARTERS**

FOURTH: The Principal office for the transaction of business of this corporation

is to be located in (To be decided by the boards of the guilds as a preliminary to incorporation).

GOVERNORS

FIFTH: Until changed in the manner provided in the by-laws of this corporation, the number of governors hereof shall be seventeen; and the names and addresses of such persons, to act as the first governors, are as follows:

(NAMES AND ADDRESSES)

BY-LAWS
COVER
OTHER
RIGHTS

SIXTH: The authorized number and qualifications of the members of this corporation, the classes of membership, the property, voting and other rights and privileges of each class of membership, and the liability of each class of membership to dues and assessments, and the method of collection thereof shall be as provided in the by-laws of this corporation and as amended in such by-laws from time to time.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have
hereunto subscribed our names as of
this day of , 1947.

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A STATEMENT FROM TAYLOR CALDWELL

Taylor Caldwell, distinguished author of This Side of Innocence and other best-selling novels, recently challenged a group of authors concerning some of the absurdities they had been repeating about the AAA proposal. Following is Taylor Caldwell's statement:

I heard about the American Authors Authority a long time ago, when it was a mere proposal in the process of formation.

At no time was it ever suggested by Mr. Cain that the Authority control the content of any author's work, nor was it ever hinted, even slightly, that there would be any censorship. That is why I cannot understand why some authors continue to repeat something which was never suggested. I don't understand where they ever got this idea.

One author speaks of "unionization of authors" as if it would be a bad thing. Well, the working man has his unions and so does the National Association of Manufacturers. Why not authors, too?

One of the reasons for the formation of the Authority was to protect American authors. We have no Social Security, no old-age pensions, unemployment insurance, or anything else. We live by our wits and our public popularity, which may fail us at any time and leave us completely stranded.

Curb on Share in Movie Rights

The Internal Revenue Bureau takes no interest in the fact that if a writer has one best-selling book he may not have another for years, if ever. The tax-gatherers just confiscate most of a best-selling writer's money and leave him nothing to live on while he writes another book, again if ever. The Authority wishes to rectify these injustices. Of course, writers who are not best-sellers have nothing to worry about, so they can

afford to despise any sort of union of authors.

Only two or three publishers, mine among them, do not demand 50% of the proceeds of a movie sale for a best-selling book. The Authority wishes to stop this, too. I don't know how many best-selling novels were sold to the movies by the other Buffalo authors, but I do know that other authors have been victimized by greedy publishers. Then there is the reprint field, which pays very poor royalties for reprints of best-selling novels.

Won't Coerce Publishers

They take no "risk." They publish only very popular novels which have had a phenomenal run in the full-price edition. The average writer does not need to worry about reprints. His books are never reprinted, so he can afford to be lofty and talk



Wanted: An AAA Counter-weight

about "creative work" in a spiritual tone of voice. All my novels have been reprinted over and over, so I know what I am talking about. The Authority will demand larger reprint royalties.

One of the Buffalo authors mentions that the Authority might try to bludgeon a publisher into taking material he doesn't want. That is erroneous. The Authority never suggested such a thing. The Authority, too, is interested only in well-established and very popular authors, who have had many best-sellers, and whose prestige and money-making power will enable the Authority to get the best terms possible for all authors.

Radio and movie rights should be protected for the author, as movie companies try to share in those rights. The Authority proposes to protect the author in this.

Greedy Publishers

A movie company can make and remake the same movie half a dozen times without giving the author a

penny more than the original contract under the present system.

I, personally, am more than satisfied with my own publishers, who have an old name for integrity and honor and fair dealing. But there are other publishers who try to grab a dozen different rights which properly belong to an author. As for them being justified in this, I can only say that publishers are pretty shrewd, and they never accept a book unless they can be sure they will get their money back, and more. They take very little risk, so do not deserve so much of an author's income.

A book is a commodity, not something transcendental to be dreamed about in an ivory tower. Such sentimentalities are for pseudo authors. As a commodity, then, which is sold in the market place like any other piece of goods, the author of it has a right to demand that he receive a fair share of the profits. The Authority proposes to take care of this.—*Reprinted by permission of the Buffalo Evening News.*

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UNTO THE SECOND GENERATION

The following letter was received recently by James M. Cain:

I am going to take this opportunity to tell you that if I can help in your A.A.A. plan in any way, I do hope that you call on me. Being so desperately far from Hollywood and all its doings, I could not vote, pour ou contre, in the S.W.G. proceedings. But if experience lends wisdom, then I am full and overflowingly wise in taking the A.A.A. project to my heart. The R.H.D. properties have been so entangled, so bewilder-

ingly dog-in-the-mangered, that I know, bitterly to our expense, that to sell something to the movies is to lose something. The words have become synonymous! Golly! Wouldn't it be beautiful if not only could we make the A.A.A. come true but also make the whole thing retroactive! Such stuff dreams etc. . . .

Your old and sincere pal:

HOPE HARDING DAVIS

(Miss Davis is the daughter of the late Richard Harding Davis, the R. H. D. of her letter).

Proposed By-Laws
for the
AMERICAN AUTHORS'
AUTHORITY
of the
AUTHORS' LEAGUE OF
AMERICA

ARTICLE ONE

LOCATION

1. The principal office shall be located in, (subject to decision of guild boards as preliminary to incorporation).

2. Location of the principal office may be changed by the governing body on compliance with the requirements of the law.

***Branch
Offices***

3. Other offices may be established by the governing body, both in the United States and foreign countries, on compliance with the requirements of the law.

ARTICLE TWO

STRUCTURE

1. The present constituent organizations are:

The Screen Writers' Guild
The Dramatists' Guild
The Radio Writers' Guild
The Authors' Guild,

hereinafter to be designated as "member organizations."

***New
Member
Organi-
zations***

2. Any member organization may propose a new member organization, but no organization shall become a member until and unless it is approved by a vote of not less than two thirds of all members of the governing body of the Authority, and until and unless the action of the governing body is ratified by the

separate member organizations in the manner which they elect to employ, and no organization shall become or remain a member organization unless it is:

- (a) non-profit;
- (b) organized, in part at least, for the benefit of professional writers;
- (c) so organized as to permit its membership to exercise democratic control over it;
- (d) free from the domination, overt or covert, of any sect, church, religion, or political party;
- (e) forbidden, by constitution, by-laws, or equivalent instrument, to discriminate against literary works by reason of their content, or against persons of any kind by reason of race, color, or creed, and unless it actually does refrain from such discrimination.

3. Each member organization admitted under the by-laws shall enjoy all of the privileges of membership until it withdraw, suffer suspension, or be expelled as herein provided.

Suspension and Expulsion

4. Any member organization, in the manner which it may elect, may propose the suspension or expulsion of another member organization, but unless all member organizations except the one cited for suspension or expulsion shall decide within ninety days, in the manner which each shall elect to employ, in favor of such suspension or expulsion, the cited member organization shall remain a member without prejudice. Upon the vote of the uncited member organizations, taken within ninety days of the citation, that the cited member organization is suspended or expelled, then the member organization shall no longer be part of the Authority, unless suspension or expulsion be conditional, in which case compliance by the suspended or expelled member organization with the specified conditions shall qualify it for reinstatement by the governing body of the Authority.

5. Any member organization may withdraw on 120 days' notice, and on payment of

any just obligations it may have incurred to the Authority.

6. Member organizations expelled or withdrawn shall have no property rights in any of the assets of the Authority.

ARTICLE THREE

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

1. The governing body shall consist of the Board of Governors and the Chairman of the Board.

Election

2. It shall consist of four governors from each member organization now constituting the Authority, to be elected in a democratic manner by the membership of the separate organizations, and from each new member organization that may be admitted, to be elected in the same manner. Each member organization may designate, in such manner as it shall elect, any number of alternates, and such alternates may exercise the voting rights of those governors appointed by such member organization who may be absent from any meeting of the board.

Term of Office

The term of office of governor or alternate is two years, but any governor or alternate may be recalled by the written notice of his constituent organization addressed to the chairman of the board but such notice, in the case of the recall of a governor, shall not be effective until the member organization shall designate a successor to hold office during the remainder of the unexpired term. Each term shall commence on the 1st day of December of each year. Not later than the first day of November, the member organization shall in writing notify the chairman of the board and the secretary of each other member organization of the names of the persons elected by it as governors and alternates.

At the first election of governors each member organization shall elect two governors for a term of one year and two governors for a term of two years.

*Qualifications
for
Governor*

3. No person may be a governor or alternate unless:

- (a) He be a member in good standing of one of the organizations constituting the membership of the Authority;
- (b) He be certified as a governor by the member he represents;
- (c) He be eligible, by all these tests:
 - (aa) He be the owner of a work or copyright;
 - (bb) He have assigned a work or copyright, or several works or copyrights, to the Authority, as trustee;
 - (cc) He have paid all fees due the Authority for services to his works or copyrights.

(d) At least half of the governors elected by each member organization must, in addition to the qualifications prescribed in subsection (c) hereof, meet the following qualification:

His works or copyrights, from transactions executed by the Authority, must have earned, during the next preceding five years, in total revenue, not less than \$1,000, counting all such transactions.

(e) No person shall be eligible to hold office as governor or alternate for more than two successive terms as alternate governor or both alternate and governor.

*National
Director*

4. The board shall choose the officers of the Authority and remove them. At its discretion the board may choose as its chief executive officer a National Director, who may be, but shall not be required to be, a member of a member organization.

5. The board shall set salaries for officers, and salaries of employees when set by officers shall be subject to its approval.

ARTICLE FOUR

**MEETINGS
OF THE
BOARD****Annual
Meeting****Place**

1. The annual meeting of the board shall take place on the 10th of December of each year, or at such other date, not more than ten days before the 10th, or after it, as the board by resolution shall determine.

2. The first annual meeting shall take place in (to be agreed on by the guilds as preliminary to incorporation). The place of the next annual meeting shall be fixed at the first annual meeting, and succeeding annual meetings shall be fixed at the next preceding annual meeting.

Quorum

3. The attendance in person of governors in a number at least twice that of the number of member organizations shall constitute a quorum of the board, not only for the annual meeting but for all other meetings. Except for the purpose of establishing the quorum, governors may vote by proxy, if the proxy be given to a governor who attends a meeting in person, or by mail ballot, said ballot not to be restricted to any particular form, but to be valid if sent as letter, and identifying the resolution, motion, or memorial it relates to with a reasonable degree of particularity.

**Special
Meetings**

4. The Chairman of the Board, National Director, or any four governors, may call a special meeting at the place of the next preceding annual meeting, by sending written notice to all other governors and certified alternates not less than fifteen days before the date set for the desired meeting, but on the written consent of all governors the meeting may be called on less than fifteen days notice, or the written notice may be dispensed with entirely. If, at a meeting called under the provisions of this paragraph, fewer governors than a quorum shall appear, no meeting of the board may be held except that the governors attending may designate a date for an adjourned meeting. In such event notice of the adjourned date shall be given in the manner required for notices of meetings. In addition, the governors attending may assume

Due Notice

the status of a committee, and memorialize the board on questions that concern them.

5. Signature of the governor on a circular, round robin, or petition, shall be deemed written notice within the meaning of the preceding paragraph, as will a telegram, provided some means, such as a telephone number, be added to afford quick and easy verification, and on presentation of separate written notice or notices in the form specified in this paragraph, it shall be the duty of the secretariat of the Authority to take appropriate steps to call the desired meeting of the board, and make arrangements for a suitable place, as well as for all physical paraphernalia the meeting may require, and they shall not wait on the order of the Chairman or any other officer of the Authority or any of its members.

Regional Meetings

6. On the written request of not less than eight governors, special meetings may be held disjunctively, in separate parts of the country simultaneously, as in Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, and New York, and if, after one such special meeting, three fourths of the governors give written consent, the annual meeting may be held in this manner too; and if any such meeting be called, it shall be the duty of the board, and of all officers of the Authority, within a reasonable degree of expense, to bend every effort, and exercise the utmost ingenuity, to find the mechanical means, by arrangement with the telephone companies, installation of suitable mechanical equipment, or in other ways, to make such meeting a practical success, it being the express intent of this paragraph to set up the means of dissolving the geographical barrier that now divides writers, and to affirm with utter solemnity the belief that hardly any condition confronting writers is so costly as this barrier, which forces them as separate spies to face united battalions, and compels them to recognize the policy that any outlay, even an outlay that other organizations might regard as extravagant, is justified if only some measure of union, of concerted action, of common understanding, be achieved by it. And in furtherance of the intention hereby expounded, it shall be the duty of the board,

and all officers of the Authority, to confer, consider, and take thought toward the development of suitable parliamentary rules to govern such meetings, and the principles of quorum that should be observed in them, the method of taking votes, and all such related questions. Provided, that until changes in procedure are agreed upon, the rules as to quorum, counting of votes, making of motions, offering of resolutions, etc., shall be the same as if the meeting were held in one place.

*Member
Organizations
Informed
Immediately*

7. All proceedings at any meeting of the board shall be transcribed in writing. Copies of the proceedings shall be mailed to each member organization within 48 hours after adjournment of the meeting to which they relate.

*Compensa-
tion*

8. Unless the board shall fix a smaller sum, the Authority may pay to each governor compensation for attendance at meetings and for time necessarily spent in travelling at the rate of \$50 a day for a period not to exceed four days for any meeting, unless by reason of adjournments, attendance on committee meetings, or other circumstances arising out of the Authority's business, the governor give more of his time than the attendance of meetings would ordinarily require, in which case the board may increase the number of days for which the governor is entitled to compensation in conformity with conditions as they actually developed. The board may pay necessary expenses of governors in attending properly called meetings of the board.

*Interim
Powers*

9. The board of governors may delegate such interim powers as it may designate to an executive committee consisting of not less than one governor from each member organization, but such executive committee shall have no power to act unless all its governors are present. Each member of the executive committee shall serve at the pleasure of the board, but no member of the committee shall serve beyond the term of the board which constituted it.

OFFICERS

ARTICLE FIVE

The officers of the Authority shall be:
Chairman of the Board

National Director
Secretary
Treasurer
Executive Signatory
Counsel

*Authors'
League
President
AAA Chairman*

1. The person serving as President of the Authors League of America shall, by virtue of his office, be Chairman of the Board.

2. The Chairman shall serve without pay.

3. The Chairman shall preside at meetings of the board and in addition shall have all of the power of a member of the board. The Chairman shall be the board's representative in all informal matters arising with officers or with his fellow directors, and shall be entitled to prompt information, not only from Authority officers and employees, but from member officers and employees.

*National
Director*

4. The National Director shall be chosen by the board, and shall serve at the pleasure of the board.

5. The National Director may be paid a salary.

6. The National Director shall supervise and administer all activities of the Authority, shall nominate officers, approve employees engaged by officers, execute orders, decisions, and resolutions of the board, and otherwise exercise the usual functions of a chief executive officer; provided, that he keep the board at all times informed of his plans, projects, and program, by means of suitable reports, memoranda, and recommendations, and that he be bound at all times by the actions of the board, not only in broad matters of policy, but in any special matters that may come up.

Secretary

7. The Secretary, on nomination of the National Director, shall be chosen by the board, but in case the National Director shall nominate more than one person, in effect submitting a slate of persons agreeable to him, then a majority vote of governors present shall be necessary for a choice; provided that if no choice be made, the National Director may appoint a Secretary interim to serve until a permanent Secretary be elected. The Secretary may be, but is not required to be, a

member of any guild, union, or similar organization.

8. The Secretary may be paid a salary.

Duties of Secretary

9. The Secretary shall keep a full and accurate record of all activities of the Authority, as well as a full and accurate record of transactions executed under each work or copyright which may be assigned to the Authority, and shall supervise a suitable staff for the keeping of such records, as well as devise appropriate forms and filing systems, for a complete and quickly available account of the status of every work or copyright. All information about the works or copyrights shall be available to the governors and officers of the Authority, and to such persons as courts may from time to time designate as eligible for access to such information, but to no other persons except the owner, his successors, or assigns. The Secretary shall render from time to time such reports as the board may require, attend its meetings if invited, as well as meetings of the Executive Committee, and give help on such matters as individual governors may be concerned with.

Treasurer

10. The Treasurer shall be chosen in the same manner as the Secretary, and shall be exempt from restrictions as to guild, or organization membership, in the same manner as the Secretary.

11. The Treasurer may be paid a salary. The Treasurer shall not be qualified to act until he shall have been bonded.

12. All funds coming into the hands of the Authority, whether the property of the Authority or of any other person, shall forthwith be deposited in one or more banks which are members of the Federal Reserve System, with the exception of petty cash necessary for minor disbursements. The Authority shall maintain separate records and separate trust accounts for funds coming into its hands which are the individual property of the assignor through work or copyright. The Treasurer shall receive and disburse the Authority monies, keeping a full and accurate record of all transactions, rendering reports to the board as it may require, and signing

checks, subject to such counter signatures as the board may direct.

Executive Signatory

13. The Executive Signatory shall be chosen in the same manner as the Secretary, and be subject to the same exemption from restrictions as to guild or organizational membership as is granted the Secretary.

14. The Executive Signatory may be paid a salary.

Signatures for AAA

15. The Executive Signatory, on the nomination of the National Director and the approval of the board, may appoint other executive signatories, to serve in the main office and in the branch offices, to the number required for quick, efficient, and dependable transaction of business, and the qualifications for such additional executive signatories, as well as the mode of paying them, re-imbursing them, and granting them advances, shall be the same as for the first executive signatory.

Execution of Instruments

16. The Executive Signatory shall execute, with appropriate seals, witnesses, and declarations, all transactions arising out of works or copyrights, accepting assignment for the Authority, and leasing, licensing, or otherwise granting limited interest in rights under a work or copyright, for the Authority as trustee for the assignor, provided:

- (a) No instrument purporting to grant any rights whatever in any work or copyright assigned shall be valid unless it bears the co-signature of the owner;
- (b) That no instrument shall be so executed unless it conforms with such minimum basic agreement, form of contract, or such model document as the Authority's member organizations may have promulgated, and be at least as favorable to the assignor as the minimum these model documents set forth;
- (c) That no instrument shall be so executed which sells, transfers, conveys, or grants the work or copyright to

*Seven
Year
Limit*

any person except the assignor, or which sells, transfers, conveys, or grants any right under the work or copyright for the life of the work or copyright, or any group of rights, or which leases, licenses, or grants an interest in any right or group of rights for a period more than seven years, or which leases, licenses, or grants an interest in right or groups of rights in such fashion as to make a sale under pretense of making a lease, as by granting an option to purchase at the end of a lease period, it being the express intent of this sub-paragraph to end the dismemberment of copyright or ownership of a work, and assure to the assignor, for the whole period the Authority holds his work or copyright, the enjoyment of all rights in his work or copyright, unmutilated, undefaced, and complete as he created it. The limit of freedom granted to the Executive Signatory in respect to total conveyance is the re-assignment, on the assignor's demand, of the work or copyright back to him, which transaction must be executed within thirty days of written notice from the assignor.

- (d) If the board shall on competent legal advice and for good cause determine that the execution of any license or other instrument related to any work or copyright assigned to the Authors Authority would or might render the Authors Authority liable in damages (as for libel, plagiarism, slander of title, or otherwise) the board may require a reasonable indemnity as a condition of the execution of any such instrument.

*No
Discrimination*

- (e) That no assignment may be refused acceptance by the executive signatory by reason of the proposed assignor's race, color, nationality, religion, or political affiliation, or by reason of the proposed assignor's

guild, union, or other organizational affiliation, or lack of it, or by reason of the content of the work which it covers, except as herein elsewhere specifically provided, and provided that nothing herein shall authorize the acceptance of assignments from anyone other than the creator of the work; nor may instruments of lease, license, or exploitation of any kind, other than sale, be withheld except for the foregoing specified reasons, it being the express intent of this sub-paragraph to throw open the facilities of the Authority to writers everywhere in the world, whether or not they are members of its member organizations or not, whether or not their views agree with the personal views of its governors, and without regard for the relative market values of material offered for assignment, it being the express intent of the Authority to service all writers equally.

*Obscenity,
Piracy, Etc.*

- (f) Nothing herein shall require or authorize the Executive Signatory to join in any transaction which, in the opinion of the board based on competent legal advice, violates any penal law (such as laws against obscenity or piracy) which is applicable to the proposed transaction. The Authority shall, by counsel and otherwise, take suitable steps to protect the rights in works and copyrights assigned to the Authority in the event of infringement, plagiarism or piracy.

COUNSEL

17. The Board may employ counsel who shall be chosen in the same manner as the Secretary, and be subject to the same exemption from restrictions as to guild, or organizational membership; provided, he must be a member in good standing of the Bar Association of the place in which he resides, and be an attorney-at-law in active practice.

18. Counsel may be paid a salary, or other form of compensation, to be set by the board.

*Duties
of
Counsel*

19. Counsel shall exercise all the duties ordinarily exercised by counsel to a corporation, attending as required the meetings of the board, executive committee, and any other committees whose deliberations need legal advice. He shall cooperate with other officers as required and shall provide assignors to the Authority, and such other writers as the board may nominate, with clear, simple, and succinct information on such subjects as libel, slander, obscenity, and copyright law, in the form of brochures, pamphlets, charts, diagrams, books, or whatever in his judgment will be most convenient. He shall confer with the National Director, and on invitation of the board give reports, on the advisability of employing legislative counsel and special advisors, and cooperate with the National Director, the officers, and governors on the formulation of an appropriate legislative program, with the purpose of obtaining, both nationally and internationally, more equitable treatment from governmental agencies, for all writers, assignors of work and creators of copyrights, it being the express intent of this paragraph to set up the means for fighting the extraordinary complex of discriminations and uncertainties that beset the writer today, some of them legislative, some of them administrative, many of them, and by far the most vexing, resulting from conflicts and variations in the opinions of various courts.

*Defense of
Authors'
Rights*

20. The board through its counsel shall take appropriate legal steps against corporate interests and all other interests which trespass the rights vested in works or copyrights by law, and shall confer, plan, and cooperate with the National Director, officers, and governors with a view to the formulation of a militant, vigorous, and continuing program against such trespass.

21. If the board shall, in the event of any suit or claim arising from any work or copyright assigned to the Authority, determine that such suit or claim is just in whole or in part, it may require, as a condition of undertaking a defense or prosecution related to

such suits or claims, the deposit with it of such reasonable sums as may be necessary to defray the expense thereof. If, however, the board shall determine that the suit or claim is unfounded, the Authority shall defend the rights of the owner; but nothing herein shall require or authorize the Authority to participate in any manner in any controversy in which assignors of works or copyrights maintain adversary contentions; in any such event the Authority shall use its good offices to mediate, conciliate, arbitrate, or otherwise dispose of the controversy without litigation if the parties to the controversy shall consent.

It is the policy of the Authority to defend the right to freedom of expression, and to this end the Authority will, unless the work plainly violates relevant laws, defend the author promptly and vigorously. The Authority will be particularly alert to protect writers in those situations where it is clear that charges of obscenity have been falsely filed against a writer, and where it is clear that suppression of honest expression is the issue, rather than the protection of public decency.

ARTICLE SIX

RECORDS CONFIDENTIAL

1. Except as provided in Paragraph 9 of Article Five, all records relating to the affairs of assignors of a work or copyright to the Authority and/or to transactions under such works or copyrights shall be confidential, and the Authority shall be without power to disclose them or their nature, in whole or in part, except on court order or the consent or request of the assignor himself.

2. All other records of the Authority, whether corporate, financial, or procedural, shall be available at reasonable hours to governors, officers, or duly authorized representatives of member organizations.

ARTICLE SEVEN

IMMUNITY OF AUTHORS' WORKS

1. The interest of each assignor in works or copyrights assigned to the Authority as trustee shall at all times be exempt from any claim which a member organization may have against the general funds of the Authority.

ARTICLE EIGHT

**LIQUIDA-
TION**

1. On liquidation of the Authority, its assets shall be distributed as follows:

- (a) All works or copyrights assigned to the Authority and other rights in literary, dramatic, cinematic, and radio-telegraphic properties which it may hold under license as trustee, shall be re-assigned or re-licensed to the original assignor or licensor;
- (b) Obligations of the Authority shall be paid;
- (c) Any remaining assets shall be liquidated into cash and distributed among member organizations in proportion to the amount of which fees collected for transactions executed under works or copyrights in the field of each member organization, plus contributions to the Authority which each member organization may have made to the Authority, shall bear to the total amount of fees collected plus contributions made by all member organizations. But, by unanimous vote of the governors, the Authority may deed any part of its assets, such as buildings, furniture, motor cars, etc., to a member organization without converting it into cash, such unanimous vote to be taken only after proportionment shall have been made, concerning the adjustment for such deed in relation to the assets to be distributed; and in the event of any such distribution in kind, the determination in good faith by the board of the value of assets distributed shall be conclusive.

MERGER

2. Resolution for liquidation, merger, consolidation, or transfer of substantially the total assets shall require an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those present at the duly

convened meeting of the board which passes it, provided:

RATIFICATION

- (a) No liquidation, merger, consolidation, or re-organization of similar kind shall begin until all member organizations have ratified the resolution of the board which authorizes it in such manner as each member organization shall elect;

WRITTEN NOTICE

- (b) Unless, on written notice of such re-organization, given promptly to the assignor of work or copyright to the Authority as Trustee, there be written acceptance of the new form of organization by the assignor, the executive signatory shall re-assign to him all works or copyrights held for him by the Authority as Trustee; but in event of liquidation the executive signatory shall re-assign works or copyrights to all assignors without notice or further correspondence, beyond such brief card of explanation as the circumstances make appropriate.

WITHDRAWAL

- (c) In event all member organizations withdraw, under the provisions of Section 5, Article Two, the officers shall proceed to liquidate, in conformity with the provisions of this article, provided all member organizations shall have met their obligations to the Authority. If any member organization, or any member organizations, within a reasonable time, fail to meet their obligations, the officers shall inquire the pleasure of the former member organizations, not in default, and be guided by it, to liquidate at once, to liquidate after an effort to collect the monies due, or to hold the assets pending possible future settlement by the defaulting member organizations. In event of refusal by former member organizations to make their pleasure known, or failure to do so, the officers shall seek guidance in court.

ARTICLE NINE

FINANCES

1. The board of governors shall have the power to specify a charge for accepting the assignments of any work or copyright.

2. The board may establish and enforce, not earlier than thirty days after promulgation, a set of charges for the execution by the Authority of any document and for the rendition of any service related to copyright or works assigned.

3. In addition to any charges herein elsewhere provided for, the board may, by resolution effective not less than thirty days after promulgation, establish and collect from owners of works or copyrights fees based on a percentage of the gross amount as and when paid to the owner under any contract, lease, license, or other instrument, whether like or unlike the foregoing, executed by the Authority and related to any work or copyright assigned to it.

ARTICLE TEN

*AMEND-
MENT*

The by-laws of this corporation may be amended only in the following manner: Upon the affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of the board of governors, the Secretary shall certify to the member organizations the proposed amendment and the vote of the board of governors. Within not less than 45 days nor more than 65 days after the receipt by each member organization of such certification, each member organization shall call a meeting of its membership for the purpose of voting on the proposed amendment; and promptly after such meeting the results of the membership's vote shall be transmitted in writing to the Secretary. Unless a majority of those voting on the proposed amendment at each election so held by each member organization shall approve the amendment, it shall fail, otherwise, unless the amendment shall contain provision to the contrary, the amendment shall become effective on the 45th day following the meeting of the member

Withdrawal of Copyright

organization first holding a meeting for the purpose herein prescribed. Immediately on receipt by the Secretary of the results of the election of the member organization last notifying the Secretary thereof, and if the proposed amendment shall have carried, the Secretary shall in writing notify every assignor of any work or copyright of the passage of the amendment and of his right to withdraw his works or copyrights from assignment with the Authority, in the event he does not wish to be bound by a rule which was not in existence when he assigned his work or copyright to the Authority.

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LETTER FROM AN ASCAP PIONEER

Edwin C. Mills, who pioneered in the organization of ASCAP, wrote the following letter to James M. Cain concerning the AAA proposal:

Mr. James M. Cain,
Los Angeles, California.
Dear Mr. Cain:

Thanks for yours of the 19th, returning the mss.

Indeed, we are not far apart on the general picture; on the contrary we are shooting at the same target, and it is one at which those who presently are violently disagreeing with you as well as your proponents, are really aiming.

And, I agree with you completely that the spirit of combat will somewhere along the line have to be aroused. But, let it be combat with the adversary, not amongst ourselves.

I submit that you cannot hope to dragoon a substantial portion of the authors into participation in a combat until they have first been educat-

ed, patiently, carefully and accurately, on the premise which justifies the participation.

Thus educated compulsion becomes entirely unnecessary. I know these principles from the best teacher of all—actual experience.

The informed author will beg for an opportunity to join the combat—the ignorant one just cannot be drafted. Teach him what his rights are and should be—how to conserve and protect them. Show him that as an individual he is helpless and hopeless in any struggle with the vested interests, but that as part of an organized group his fair, equitable and legal rights can be protected to his substantial individual benefit, and he'll become an enthusiastic and loyal participant.

I well remember when it was a terrific job to persuade an important composer to become a member of ASCAP. It took years of great effort and persistent education to persuade them. Today there isn't a single im-

portant American composer who is not a member of ASCAP.

They fight, and very successfully, for their rights today, through their organization, in which they have vested one of their rights, and by the rules of which, as to those rights, the individual members are completely bound.

I am thoroughly aware of the shortcomings of the Authors' League; I have been close to it for many

concerned contained in the basic principle which you are fomenting. Let the principle be understood, and almost unanimous support will follow.

Get hold of a copy of the recent Anniversary Edition of Variety (January 8, page 50) and read my article entitled—"Authors Should Own Copyrights And Limit The Usages." Though because of space limitations much of the guts of my mss was necessarily scissored, I think the point is made.

If I can at any time be helpful in any way, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

E. C. MILLS.

Jan. 24, 1947.

Following is James M. Cain's comment on Mr. Mills' letter:

There is nothing in Mr. Mills' letter with which we are not in agreement, 100 per cent. Let it be once more emphasized: we are not in competition with the Authors' League, nor do we wish to by-pass it, engorge it, supersede it, or destroy it. Nor are we, regardless of whatever clashes individuals among us may occasionally have been involved in, part of any faction in the League, openly or secretly, nor have we any belief in the prospects of any faction, since it is our belief that the weaknesses of the League are fundamental, beyond the power of any faction to cure.

We know perfectly well that if it is writers we hope to help, then it is the League which enlists writers: whether we like it or not, whether we think the League admirable or not, the League is what we have to work with, and we have no illusions that some other organization can be built which will start from scratch and gain success.

It is our purpose to build on the League, to retain what has been good about it until now, which is scholarship, skill, and the dissemination of invaluable information, and beyond that, to strengthen it in the area where it is weak, which is combat; to put a weapon into its hands with which it can fight, which is the immemorial way, and the only immemorial way, that rights, whether literary, political, human, or economic, can be enforced.



For Rent or Lease Only

years. I have stood side-by-side with its representatives debating Copyright Laws before Congressional Committees. That it has not functioned more efficiently, or aggressively if you please, is the fault of its members. They have not chosen the right leaders. And, the leaders they have chosen have failed to educate the membership along the lines you have in mind.

I hold no brief for the Authors' League. I do hold a brief for the principle (a) of using a tool already to hand if it can be shaped for the job to be done, and (b) for the elimination of internal dissension through education. There can be no question of the sound equity to all

EDITORIAL

WHATEVER disagreement still exists about the merits of the plan for an American Authors' Authority, it is generally conceded that no proposal regarding the economic interests of writers ever provoked so much interest and comment. Opinions have ranged all the way from unreserved acclaim to, as the samples included on pages 50 to 54 testify, pathological abuse. It is important, in the midst of the confusion and hysteria, to appraise objectively the present status of the plan and the progress which has been made towards its realization.

Eight months have passed since we published James M. Cain's first formulation of the AAA idea. We recognized at the start that there were two distinct stages to the struggle which lay ahead: first, to unify all writers, or a substantial majority of them, around a common version of the program, and, second, to put it into force through our collective strength.

We are still in the first stage and it will unquestionably take several more months to achieve the measure of agreement among writers which we feel is required before engaging the publishers and producers.



One encouraging fact has become clear from the discussions held so far. That is that American writers as a whole, except for a quite small minority which still chooses to glorify anarchy under the name of "rugged individualism," are in favor of an organized program to substitute licensing for outright sale of literary rights. The Authors' Guild, traditionally the least cohesive of the member and affiliated guilds of the Authors' League, has been stimulated by the AAA proposal to consider the initiation of a licensing policy in the field of motion picture rights. Such a step would in no way interfere with the broader AAA concept, which has always contemplated that the guilds would make the specific regulations in their various jurisdictions.

Three principal fears about the AAA were expressed by its opponents when the plan was first published. The proposed Articles of Incorporation and By-laws which we are now submitting as a basis for more detailed discussion should permanently dispel all three of them.

The fear that the AAA might somehow exert control over the content of literary material is answered by the unequivocal provisions forbidding any type of discrimination against a writer or his work.

The fear of a one-man dictatorship over writers is answered by the democratic machinery provided to elect the governing body and officers of the AAA.

The fear of a monopoly of established writers which would tend to freeze out new talent is answered by the rule that the only qualification necessary to use the facilities of the AAA will be a reasonable service charge.

In our discussions and correspondence with the leadership of the Authors League and the member guilds, certain other reservations have been expressed. Some people are worried that the AAA might become a threat to the League itself. Actually it is our intention that AAA would be an organ of the League, subordinate to it and limited to the single function of providing the machinery for licensing. The By-laws provide that the president of the League shall be the chairman of the board of governors of the AAA.

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There is also a fear in some quarters that writers would lose actual control of the copyrights which are their most valued possessions. Two provisions in the By-laws take care of this problem. One is that the authority can make no disposal of any kind without the counter-signature of the writer. The other gives every writer the unlimited right to withdraw his assignment of copyright on thirty days' notice.

Another worry which has been expressed is that less successful writers or those who, as is general in screen and radio writing, work for a weekly salary would control by their numbers the interests of the relatively small group of valuable copyright owners. To meet any possible objection of this nature, we have specified that at least half of the board of governors must be the holders of active rights in literary material.

In drawing up these tentative Articles of Incorporation and By-laws we have tried to meet every sincere objection to the original proposal without weakening its effectiveness. But we wish to stress the fact that they are tentative and are submitted for the sole purpose of making possible a more specific discussion of the plan among all American writers.

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A PRESS COMMENTARY

The following comment, which represents a certain cross-section of the American press, speaks for itself:

*Upton Close; syndicated column,
Hearst papers and others*

"Some writers with delusions of grandeur have figured out a way, they claim, to 'compel every writer in the country hoping for picture or magazine sales to send his work to us.' They call themselves the American Authors' Authority. They have an ambitious plan: Regiment all authors into a union which will take out his copyrights for all manuscripts in the name of the organization."

Charlotte, N.C., Observer

"One of the baldest efforts to shackle the intellectual life of America and create a dictatorship that would make James Caesar Petrillo look like a piker is the proposal to create an American Authors' Authority."

Chronicle, San Francisco, California

"A plan may or may not be communistic in its nature, without being Communistic. If the lower-case 'c' had been used in the first statement—as it seems to me it should have been—then Mr. Rice's remark that 'there is no Red issue' becomes quite clear. Of course there isn't. A lot of things we've been doing in this country for years are 'essentially communistic' in nature without at all being Communistic."

*Rev. John F. Cronin,
Dubuque, Ia., Witness*

"Since radio and screen outlets

are the most lucrative in the writing profession, the Authority, backed by the unions, would be able to force the most successful writers to join. With the best writers under its control, the Authority would then put pressure upon magazine or book publishers to use only its authors, under penalty of being denied the manuscripts produced by its members. The members, in turn, would be compelled by the Authority to join the Guild representing their profession. The tactics proposed could well prove successful. Mr. Petrillo used similar methods to force entire orchestras into his union, even when the musicians were unwilling. In this case, however, the Authority would control ideas, whereas Mr. Petrillo merely controls entertainment."

Dispatch, Columbus, Ohio

"The best tip-off to date on the complete undesirability of the plan is the fact that it is too much even for the Saturday Review of Literature to swallow, a periodical which yields to none in consistent espousal of the leftist point of view."

*Charles B. Driscoll; syndicated
column, New York Day by Day*

"Good luck to brave little Irene Kuhn in her battle to keep American writing from being ruled and regimented into the great war for Communism in America! Irene sent out a call for American writers to combat the movement, conceived

and launched on the west coast, to create a monopoly in writing, to be known as the American Authors' Authority."



The Great Anti-AAA Juggling Act

*Alberta Eagan,
New York Sun*

"It is unbelievable that this effort of James Cain to shackle the brains of the authors of this supposedly free country could gain headway; nevertheless, he and his cohorts are making strenuous efforts to win at least some measures of this atrocious scheme."

Editor & Publisher, New York, N.Y.

"Once this all-embracing Authority—which cannot only control the writers' expression but can also squeeze publishers into line who print the works of non-conforming authors—is firmly established as the agent for magazines, radio, movies, and books it is not an illogical step to the control of syndicated material—columnists, comics, etc. Newspapers should resist any such attempt to create a monopoly control of literary output in this country."

Enterprise, Beaumont, Texas

"Yet, in a way, this idea is the logical result of applying or attempting to apply Communist principles to the American government. The authors' authority would in effect create a monopoly to which all writers who write for a living, and most writers who hope to see what they have written in print, would have to subscribe or suffer the consequences."

*James T. Farrell,
Saturday Review of Literature*

"Organization, collectivization, is good on the economic front; but only anarchy, freedom, struggle toward untrammelled freedom in the expression of ideas and the creation of art can be our guide."

H.C.G. in America

"But the scheme, as it was originated, is foolish and dangerous. Many charges that it is Communist-sponsored have been hurled about, but I prefer not to go into them. It is true that the New Masses cheers approvingly, but that may be simply a matter of having embarrassing friends. What is of importance is that the plan paves the way for regimentation of writers and their ideas."

Herald, Augusta, Ga.

"There is a red herring drawn across the writer's trail here also. The authority promises to advise the writer of all dubious deals, doubtful concerns and contracts contrary to accepted trade practices, and perform many other services an author would welcome, as a cover for the true intentions of the group. This is one of the most insidious attacks on the freedom of speech in a nation's literature that has ever come to our notice."

Raymond Howard, New Leader, N.Y.

"Obviously, the AAA was set up, not only to gain a Stalinist monopoly over the literary field, but as a broad organization to take the place of the defunct League of American Writers. This base now is shaky. The American Writers' Association offers an organization to the liberal, anti-totalitarian au-

thor, and the exposure of the AAA on a wide front has hurt the Stalinists."

H.S. (Harrison Smith) in Saturday Review of Literature, New York

"Whether there are Communists in Hollywood and in radio studios or not, it is our opinion that the American Authors' Authority is dangerous and unworkable. And that it is what we like to call un-American is obvious from the threats of intimidation invented by Mr. Cain in these sentences: 'This will compel every writer in the country hoping for picture or magazine sale to send his work to the Authority for copyright before magazines or publishers get it.' If this should ever come about, no fiction writer or popular non-fiction writer could escape. Of course they can retire to their farms purchased with the ill-gotten profits of magazines and motion picture owners, turn their swimming pools into asparagus beds, and devote themselves to cows and agriculture murmuring, 'Give me liberty or give me death.'"

Frank Hughes, Syndicated dispatch

"Through a copyright control scheme called the American Authors' Authority, pro-Communists in the Hollywood Screen Writers' Guild plan further to enrich themselves and at the same time prevent any manuscript from reaching print or being seen on the screen which has not been distributed and approved by a writer's czar."

Rupert Hughes, Syndicated article

"The seven-year itch has broken out again. Just seven years ago about a dozen screen writers decided to take over all literature. They loved to hold meetings and pass laws. They issued a 20-page constitution to cover all forms of literary expression. When I protested that many writers would not even read the document, a scenario writer said that any author who did not read the constitution and vote on it had lost all literary rights. I protested that this horrifying impertinence was an effort to

stabilize literature of every sort. Now, seven years later, a group dominated by the same majority of Communists proposes to take over all copyrights of every kind. For once they come out in the open and call it Authority."

Elizabeth Marion, Saturday Review of Literature

"As an apprentice writer and more important a human being accustomed to regarding books and 'the arts' as among the necessities of life, and therefore to be treated with respect, I can't express too strongly enough my opposition to such a dangerous and stupid scheme. People like me have no way of knowing authoritatively what Communists have to do with it, but at least we can suspect that a stupid American can be as dangerous as a well-instructed Communist, and we're sure to wonder what good more money engineered by an 'authority' would do us if and when we are told how to earn that money."

Frederick G. Melcher, in Publishers' Weekly, New York, N.Y.

"The Screen Writers urge that the writers 'take the power that awaits them and that a massively powerful organization is possible in a short time, with a \$1,000,000 kitty and a full-time tough mug at the head of it.' Have authors been so badly treated that they need such guardianship?"

N. Y. Daily News

"Comes the Revolution for U.S. Writers?"

News-Courier, Charleston, S.C.

"The News and Courier is doubtful of the success of the efforts to shackle the human mind in dollar links though they have in recent years made progress. Most of the great books, the books that last, have not caused their writers to pay tall income taxes. Aesop's Fables is a book we like, and it was, we guess, a financial failure."

New Register, Wheeling, W. Va.

"This newspaper could shoot the idea full of holes. It is only necessary to point out one conspicuous

drawback, however, the technique of which stands out like the Empire State Building. Not only would the writer be controlled, but what he says would have to have the official endorsement of the Authority. Instead of free expression in all writings, there would be a directed one."

New York Times,
Topics of the Times

"Most people find the threat rather in the fact that publishers would be prohibited under the scheme from doing business with writers who are not members of the Authors' Authority. A writer whose ideas aroused strong disapproval among the higher command of the Authors' Authority might find the market hopelessly closed against him. Such ideological control of a large organization by a few strategically placed individuals on top is a commonplace of our times. If the peril seems remote in this particular case it is not a risk to be easily dismissed by writers 'fully conscious of our almost unique freedom in the enslaved world of today,' in Miss Thompson's words."

Byron Price, v.p. Motion
Picture Association

"No writer could hope for acceptance of his manuscript unless he first made a deal with the Authority, precisely as German writers were required to do under Nazism, and as Russian writers must do under Communism."

Producer, Seminole, Okla.

"The idea back of the Authors' Authority is to correct economic injustices suffered by writers. We're willing to accept that as a justifiable motive, but we're not willing to agree that existing guilds cannot take care of such problems without subordinating themselves to an all-controlling organization which could—and probably would—exercise strangling power over freedom of expression in the United States."

Star, Minneapolis, Minn.

"A communist-tinged organization with Nazi-like ideas has pro-

posed a plan for the regimentation of the main sources of American thought. It seems the creation of an 'American Authors' Ass'n.' through which all writers would have to market all their works intended for publication through radio, magazine, or books."

Jonathan Stout, Syndicated
Washington Column

"As a result of international relations, the possibilities of this plan have interested Washington officials."

Tablet, Brooklyn, N.Y.

"Obviously, any sensible appraisal of the Cain plan should begin with the axiom, 'Consider the source.' That the originators of the scheme have been publicly accused of being Communist-dominated ought to be enough to make all authors and writers extremely wary of the plan."

Dorothy Thompson, in the
New Leader, N.Y.

"The fact is that the popular writers who make so much money for publishers are the persons who enable the publisher to take the losses often involved in launching new, unknown writers. And should not these writers whom fortune has favored, usually after a long struggle, be willing and glad to help them?"

Dorothy Thompson, On the Record,
Syndicated Column

"The boldest and most unconscionable danger to the sources of public opinion in the United States lies in a plan already accepted by the Screen Writers' Guild of Hollywood and now being submitted by that guild and by the Radio Writers' Guild which has likewise adopted it, to all other organizations of American writers. . . . How did Goebbels establish thought control in Germany? By the Fascist variety of syndicalism to which this proposal belongs. He established an authors' authority—the Association of German Writers—which barred from publication all non-members. This association became the sole agent through

which writers could market their works. It was then only necessary to keep it nazi-controlled to see that non-nazis, or those of dubious attitude, were economically-strangled unless they conformed."

James Thrasher, NEA Service

"The fact that the Cain plan is backed by the notoriously Communist-dominated Screen Writers' Guild is only an incidental objection. The point is that Cain is asking writers to adopt a plan by which their writings could be suppressed by the AAA for any reason.

"The magazine, radio, and picture industries are asked to adopt a plan which would permit the AAA to dictate the subject matter used by all three, if they chose to do so. So, though Cain may be promising to get the writers more money, it is clear that they stand to lose more than they gain.

"The AAA plan is a potential blow at independent writing and a free press. We believe this is a Triple-A which might well be plowed under.

"The AAA too would take away one of the main satisfactions in the strenuous lives of magazine editors and book publishers—the happiness of having some new and promising talent burst into the shop out of a clear sky, and helping that talent develop. New talent would have to go first to the AAA under the proposed set-up—and we have a feeling that some of the aging talent now backing the AAA would make it pretty tough for youngsters to break past this barrier."

(Also, verbatim, and by pure coincidence, so far as any credit, by-line, or signature shows to the contrary, The San Angelo, Tex., Standard Times; Wallace, Idaho, Press-Times; Monroe, La., News Star; Hope, Ark., Star; Walla Walla, Wash., Union Bulletin; Pawhuska, Okla., Journal Capital; McAlester, Okla., News Capital; Wiliston, N.D., Herald; Ephrata, Pa., Ensign; Sheridan, Wyo., Press; Lebanon, Mo., Daily News; Durango, Colo., Herald Democrat; Edwardsville, Ill., Intelligencer;

Wordland, Wyo., Northern Wyoming Daily News; Brunswick, Ga., News; Sulphur Springs, Tex., News Telegram; Manitowoc, Wis., Daily Times; Waco, Tex., Times-Herald; Owassa, Mich., Argus Press; Del Rio, Tex., News-Herald; Denison, Tex., Herald; Denton, Tex., Record Chronicle; The Mt. Vernon, Ill., Register; Douglas, Ariz., Dispatch; Bisbee, Ariz., Review; St. Joseph, Mo., Gazette; Martinsville, Va., Bulletin; Midland, Tex., Reporter-Telegram; Idaho Falls, Idaho, Evening Post Register; Madison City, Iowa, Globe Gazette; Woodward, Okla., Press; Altus, Okla., Times Democrat; Dubuque, Iowa, Telegraph Herald; Ashland, Ore., Daily Tydings; Iowa City, Iowa, Press Citizen; El Reno, Okla., Tribune; Logan, Utah, Herald-Journal; Elk City, Okla., News; Santa Maria, Calif., Times.)

Times-Union, Jacksonville, Fla.

"Toscanini is the example to follow, not Petrillo. . . . There'll never be another Leo Tolstoy in Russia as long as that nation is under a 'dictatorship of the proletariat.' Nor will there ever be more Ralph Waldo Emersons or William Dean Howells if the 'American Authors' Authority,' a group organized in Hollywood by screen writers to exercise monopoly control over all American literary production, is allowed to carry out its purpose."

Virginian Pilot, Norfolk, Va.

"The line-up of big guns on both sides suggests that some mighty verbal barrages will be forthcoming. We place our hopes—and bets—on the AWA."

*W. R. Wilkerson,
Hollywood Reporter*

"When writers generally got their fight for their denial of outright sales for their properties into a winning gear, the Commies figured that was the spot and platformed their attempted grab on that fight and a collective effort to winning it through a dictatorship set up for the protection of the writers' property, through the phony Authors' Authority that was dumped into James Cain's lap for voicing." Etc., etc. et multa cetera.

AUTHORS BECOME AWARE THEY HAVE ECONOMICS

By THEODORE PRATT

For the past two years the above annual by-line has been run over certain mutterings about authors' economics. It was pointed out that publishers, for one consumer of authors' goods, look upon writers with a pretty deep-seated myopia. Once, in the European Dark Ages, writers were regarded artistically with respect, but economically were thrown a bone in their attics upon the rare occasions no one else had any use for the bone.

The teeth of modern authors aren't much good for crunching hard, dry bones, and their ulcer-ridden stomachs decidedly can't cope with the unenviable fare. Also, they don't like living in attics any more. To hell with Bohemia. It's colorful, but give me the St. Regis; it's warmer and the beds are more comfortable.

That has been more or less the theme song of this department for the last two years. It could not be discerned that anyone paid much, or any, attention. Maybe the yearly words weren't loud enough.

Meanwhile, however, a couple of things were happening right in the same groove. Through more years than two, writers began to be thrown bones with a few scraps of meat attached. In Hollywood, with the book clubs, and by the best-seller lists, the bones arrived with large, juicy steaks built on. These were for a comparatively few authors. The rest had to be satisfied with a couple of fair chops at best.

But the back of the myopia, to coin a metaphor, had been broken. The publisher had glasses, even though not very efficient ones, forced on him. Through these he peered at the worm who approached him with a manu-

script and to his discomfort, often saw that the worm had taken nearly human shape. The creature even looked as if it had rights, as well as a wife and some kids to feed. It might even be profitable, from the long view, to treat him better economically, particularly because rivals down the street might get the same idea.

Of course it wouldn't do to go overboard. Hang on tenaciously to the centuries' old custom of taking half of the huge book club payments, letting the author keep the other half, or at least what he has left after paying his agent and straight personal income tax instead of the lower rate the publisher as a corporation pays on his like amount. Take this coin, often amounting to \$50,000 as a first advance payment to each, without even blushing for having done nothing whatsoever to have earned it, the book written by the author solely and only earning it at that point because the publisher hasn't even published it yet.

Hang on to taking half of all subsidiary publication rights; that's what the gentlemen publishers of the 90's did and what was good enough for them is good enough for us. Chisel out as much as possible of the picture and dramatic rights, though we'll never have anything to do with the picture or the play until we are sent free tickets for the opening. Dip into handling the radio and foreign rights for a nice fat share in spite of the author or his agent being able to do it for 10%. Hang together with other publishers in establishing these and other customs as traditional, for without them we couldn't do business. Or could we?

Middle Ages publishing viewpoints were making feeble and unenthusi-

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astic attempts to keep up with the fact that this is the 20th Century. In the trade, authors may not have as much artistic respect as they had in Elizabethan times, but that's a commodity they've found they can do without better than they once believed—or were told. They'll now exchange it in inverse ratio to economic respect, and still do the best work they can.

But the going was tough. Finally they reached a point where they



The Best Is Yet To Be

weren't going any farther forward. The pace had stopped at 50% of the book club and subsidiary rights, of picture companies almost always buying their work outright forever and forever, and making as many pictures out of it as they pleased with no further payment.

That was where matters stood last July. They stand much in the same place today. But last July a large and noisy firecracker exploded in the middle of the genteel situation. It awakened all the Katzenjammer kids. The firecracker was a little matter called the American Authors' Authority. It was cooked up by the screenwriters in Hollywood and

mouthed, in their publication, through James M. Cain.

Cain rang the doorbell not twice this time, but when his finger went on it, the bell stuck. It is still buzzing, loudly, with lots of people running to many doors trying to answer it. To say that the AAA put everybody connected with authorship in the related fields of publishing and entertainment into a tizzy is to say that it put them into a TIZZY.

Here were no low-voiced murmurs once a year in a family weekly. Here was a bellow. It announced a plan. It stated specific cases and what might be done. It had a program. It showed fangs. It issued a clarion call.

It was heard, and produced turmoil that still needs no stirring. Some authors swallowed it whole, undiluted, and as first and almost savagely presented. Others became so frightened of it that they would have no part of it; they saw the teeth that were proposed to be given to the AAA to put the bite on users of written material as turning around and perhaps biting them.

Still others, the moderates said, "Wait a minute. Let's look at this thing. Let's question it. Let's consider it for what it is worth. Let's maybe study it and if it is worth anything, tone it down to reason, and try to apply it."

That's where she stands today. The original plan is being considerably altered, but kept is its basic premise of organizing writers effectively. Its greatest enemies probably are writers themselves who, being such crashing occupational individualists, can't get used to the idea of working as a team in their own economic interests. Whatever may come of the AAA-Cain plan it is generally felt that out of the boiling controversy will come certain financial reforms in the writer's affairs.

The year saw authors' economics jump from a shy column in the Anniversary Variety to the front pages of newspapers all over the country. Even authors became aware that they had economics.—*Reprinted by permission from 1947 Anniversary Edition of Weekly Variety.*

A A A L O G

The following is a brief outline of developments in relation to the American Authors' Authority.

JANUARY, 1945

The Guild Committee on the Sale of Original Material began discussions of the problems of writers in selling original material to motion pictures.

JUNE 13, 1945

A letter was sent by the Screen Writers' Guild to the Presidents of the Authors' League and the member Guilds of the League, (i.e., Russell Crouse, President of the Authors' League, Richard Rodgers, President of the Dramatists' Guild, Peter Lyon, President of the Radio Writers' Guild, and Rex Stout, President of the Authors' Guild), proposing that the Guilds in the League enter into discussions as to the details of a joint program including the following:

- (1) *Licensing instead of outright sale of motion picture rights for the production of a single picture, all rights reverting to the author after a period of perhaps five years from the date of the agreement;*
- (2) *Reversion of rights to the author if production does not start within a reasonable length of time;*
- (3) *Royalty compensation: It was proposed that possible minimum terms and controls governing royalty contracts should be discussed.*

Replies were received from the Guild Presidents saying that the matter would be considered by the various Guild Councils.

JUNE 25, 1945

A Joint meeting of the Executive Board of the Screen Writers' Guild and the Council of the Radio Writers' Guild, Western Region, was held. This meeting created a Joint Television Writers' Organization Commit-

tee to preempt the jurisdiction of writers in television and to take immediate steps to protect authors' rights. George Corey was named Chairman of this Committee.

AUGUST, 1945

The Authors' League Council appointed representatives of the Authors' Guild and Dramatists' Guild to this Committee and made it an official Authors' League Committee.

OCTOBER 2, 1945

The first meeting of this Authors' League Television Committee was held in Hollywood and made two recommendations to the Authors' League Council:

- (1) *That television rights be licensed or leased, and not sold outright.*
- (2) *That the League work toward separation of rights.*

JANUARY 16, 1946

Emmet Lavery represented the Screen Writers' Guild at a meeting of the Authors' League Council in New York. The Council voted unanimously to establish a television policy favoring licensing of literary material and the separation of copyrights.

MARCH 4, 1946

The Screen Writers' Guild, at an open Board meeting, approved the following resolution which was submitted to the Authors' League and member Guilds by letter on March 8th:

"In any arrangement by which there is granted the right to produce a motion picture based on material written by any member of the Authors' League or its member and affiliated Guilds, there shall be granted only the right to produce and exhibit, within a stated period,

a single motion picture on 35 mm. film in the English language, together with the customary provisions relating to the use of sound, dialogue and music. Such rights shall be in the form of a license, limited as aforesaid, which shall cease on the expiration of a fixed period of time."

APRIL 26, 1946

The Authors' League Council approved in principle the licensing of motion picture rights for a stated period, rather than the outright sale of rights, and referred the problem to the several Guilds of the League for consideration, asking the Guilds to report back their findings to the League Council.

MAY, 1946

Emmet Lavery's article on licensing and separation of rights, *A Time For Action*, was printed in *THE SCREEN WRITER*.

JUNE 24, 1946

The Committee on the Sale of Original Material met with the Executive Board to discuss the proposal submitted by James M. Cain, and approved by the Committee, that an American Authors' Authority be established to put into effect the principle of licensing and separation of rights.

The Executive Board, at this meeting, approved the principle of the plan proposed by Mr. Cain and agreed that it should be printed in *THE SCREEN WRITER* in preparation for discussion at a membership meeting. It was also agreed that the Authors' League should be asked to name a West Coast and East Coast Committee to submit specific proposals to the Guilds for the establishment of the licensing principle.

JULY, 1946

James M. Cain's article proposing an American Authors' Authority was printed in *THE SCREEN WRITER*.

JULY 29, 1946

A membership meeting of the SWG heard a report by Ring Lardner, Chairman of the Guild Committee on

the Sale of Original Material, and adopted the following resolution by a vote of 343 to 7—5 members not voting.

"That the Screen Writers' Guild endorses in principle the working out with the other Guilds of the Authors' League of America a plan for the establishment of an American Authors' Authority along the general lines prepared by James M. Cain in conjunction with the Original Material Committee and that the Executive Board is instructed to proceed, in co-operation with the rest of the League, to draft a specific program to achieve this purpose, which program shall be subject to ratification at a future general membership meeting."

AUGUST 5, 1946

The SWG Executive Board appointed an American Authors' Authority Committee consisting of the following members of the Guild, who in many instances are also members of other Guilds of the Authors' League (Indicated in parentheses):

Emmett Lavery, Chairman—(DG)
 Robert Arday—(DG)
 Art Arthur
 Edmund Beloin
 Alvah Bessie—(AG)
 True Boardman—(RWG)
 Sidney Boehm
 James M. Cain—(AG, DG)
 Philip Dunne
 Joseph Fields—(DG)
 Everett Freeman
 Frances Goodrich—(DG)
 Albert Hackett—(DG)
 F. Hugh Herbert—(DG, AG)
 Boris Ingster
 Ring Lardner, Jr.
 Albert Maltz—(AG, DG)
 Mary McCall, Jr.—(AG)
 Henry Myers—(DG, AG)
 Arch Oboler—(RWG, SWG)
 Allen Rivkin
 Louise Rousseau
 Adela Rogers St. John—(AG)
 Arthur Schwartz—(DG)

For the Radio Writers' Guild:

Sam Moore, National President, RWG.

Aubrey Finn, Counsel, RWG
Western Region

Counsel:

Morris E. Cohn
Robert Morris, Jr.

(Robert Nathan, Frank Cavett, and Hugh Gray have been appointed to the Committee as new members for 1947.)

AUGUST 29, 1946

The AAA Committee held its first meeting. The other Guilds of the League were asked to authorize their members named to the SWG Committee as their representatives, on the West Coast Committee.

SEPTEMBER 5, 1946

The Dramatists' Guild authorized, for purposes of study and report, the participation of Robert Ardrey, Frances Goodrich, Albert Hackett, Joseph Fields, and F. Hugh Herbert, on the West Coast Committee.

SEPT. 12, 1946

The American Writers' Association was formed in New York City to fight the American Authors' Authority.

SEPT. 18, 1946

Authors' League Council, at a meeting in New York, unanimously approved the appointment by Elmer Rice, President of the League, of a Committee consisting of the Presidents of the Radio Writers' Guild, Authors' Guild and Dramatists' Guild, and SWG, with himself as Chairman, to study the AAA plan. The resolution adopted by the Council was as follows:

"Moved, seconded, and carried unanimously that the President appoint a Committee to study the American Authors' Authority plan and any other ways and means of reaching the desired objectives of the leasing of literary property, instead of its outright sale, and the separation of rights; the Commit-

tee shall investigate, report, and make recommendations to this Council."

SEPT. 24, 1946

The Authors' League Committee had its first meeting in New York. Marc Connelly was present as the representative of Emmet Lavery, President of SWG.

DEC. 20, 1946

The Authors' League Committee issued its Interim Report endorsing the principles of licensing and separation of rights and promising its full recommendations as soon as they have reached the "blueprint stage."

WOULD AAA BE LIKE A BANK?



Yes, AAA would be very much like a bank: a bank, in which both materials and moneys are held at various times for the benefit of each holder of a work or copyright. And, like a bank, the individual accounts would be separate trust accounts distinct from the general funds of the Authority.

THE CLAMBAKE AWARD

HARRY KURNITZ

Oliver Orpheus, the story genius of Clambake Films, was pacing the floor of his office with the eager air of a man with big news to impart. He waved me to a chair, then climbed nimbly into his own.

"Take a scoop," said Orpheus. "Clambake Films is going to have a novel contest."

I pointed out that Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer already had a novel contest, awarding annually a vast sum in cash and royalties. "Can you hope to top Metro?," I asked.

"Our prize," murmured Orpheus, "is the city of Cleveland, Ohio." He sneered in the general direction of Culver City. "Furthermore, the winner may keep Cleveland, or, after six months, sell the whole thing as a capital gain. We of Clambake Films," he read from a paper on his desk, "offer this as our humble and sincere inducement to the authors of America in the hope that our horizon of culture and thought may be heightened and advanced." He looked up, his shrewd, merry eyes twinkling across the desk. "That's a son-of-a-gun of a prize, ain't it, kid?"

"Sensational!," I cried, snatching at the phone on his desk. "Let me phone the Saturday Review of Literature. They'll have to tear out the front page to make room for this, but it's worth it."

"A few more details," said Orpheus. "The publisher of the prize-winning novel will receive a special award consisting of any other pub-

lishing company he chooses, which will be presented to him, lock, stock, barrel and authors. The agent of the winning novelist, in addition to the customary 10%, will receive a 99-year lease on the front booth in Romanoff's restaurant, and all his clients will be equipped, at our expense, with a new photo-electric device which cries 'Stop, Thief!' if the client so much as pauses in the vicinity of the MCA building. Naturally, with so much at stake, the judges have been chosen with infinite care: they are Princess Zoraida, a spiritualist who is in constant touch with the late Charles Dickens and who will read him all the entries; Storm Signals, the Literary Editor of the Daily Running Horse, and '—with a modest smile—yours truly.' No novel can be submitted to the contest by phone and entries which are telegraphed collect will be disqualified. If two or more writers submit identical novels, the entry bearing the earlier postmark will receive the award. There are no rules as to length, except that no writer may submit a manuscript weighing more than the writer himself."

"Eminently fair, but is the contest restricted? Can anyone compete for the rich prize?"

"An excellent question," said Orpheus. "The contest is open to every American except James M. Cain, his employees, or members of his family."

—*Weekly Variety*.

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IS LICENSING SOMETHING NEW?

No, licensing is not something new. The dramatists were operating on this principle in the theatre long before screen writers began to talk about it, and long before the Authors League of America went on record as favoring the

principle for all guilds in all fields.

Currently, the Radio Writers Guild is asking for licensing, instead of sale, as the first point in its proposal for a new minimum basic contract with the four major networks.

MEMO FROM NORMAN CORWIN

Norman Corwin's radio play, We Hold These Truths, dramatized the Bill of Rights for the greatest listening audience in the history of radio.

In a note published in More By Corwin (Henry Holt & Co.), Corwin tells how he slipped on the copyright, and what happened as a result. He writes these words of warning to all authors:

NEVER, NEVER GIVE AWAY CONTROLLING RIGHTS TO ANYTHING YOU HAVE WRITTEN.

It is ironic that a script about the Bill of Rights should itself have been a horrible example of what happens to a writer when he gets careless with copyright. Several publishers made bids for *We Hold These*

Truths, but because the program had been a public occasion and everybody had contributed his part without fee, I felt that nobody, including myself, was entitled to make money out of its reproduction in any form. I therefore asked the OFF to grant publication rights to the highest bidder, and stipulated that all earnings from sales be given to a war relief.

I shall not go into gruesome details, but this gesture wound up with a publisher making antic changes in my text and taking out copyright in his own name — all without my knowledge or consent. My protests were not even acknowledged. **THE MORAL TO WRITERS IS PLAIN: PROTECT YOUR COPYRIGHT EVEN WHEN GIVING THINGS AWAY.**

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STRAWS IN THE WIND

Leasing of original literary material instead of outright sale, and the stoppage of the blanket disposal of secondary rights, isn't something dreamed up in Hollywood for the more or less remote future.

Many writers are making these deals. The American Authors' Authority will enable all writers to protect their literary property interests in this way.

Here are a few recent straws in the wind:

Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse have **LEASED** — not sold — *State of the Union* to Liberty Films for a ten

year period for \$350,000, plus ten per cent of the net.

William Saroyan has **LEASED** — not sold — the rights to *The Time of Your Life* to William Cagney for a seven year period for \$150,000.

Edna Ferber, Fannie Hurst and Lillian Hellman have recently **LEASED** — not sold — story and play properties through deals which bring them rich annual returns and keep in their possession the vital ownership of copyright.

Writers are urged to report leasing deals to the SWG Overall AAA Committee.

DOES AAA APPLY TO FILMS ONLY?

No. The A.A.A. is a licensing plan which would apply to the marketing of literary material in all mediums. But it would not su-

persede the Authors League nor would it replace the individual guilds. It would supplement the League and the Guilds in the furtherance of their basic programs.

SUMMATION

THE American Authors' Authority is a projected repository of copyrights, to be held as trustee for authors, by means of which it is hoped to correct ancient abuses in the field of marketing literary property, and to obtain for the author his rightful position as owner of his material.

The rationale of the plan is that since authors immemorially have wielded so little power on the basis of organizations in which *PERSONS* were represented, they would gain greatly in strength if in addition to personal representation they had *PROPERTY* representation, as such.

The Authority, then, represents an effort to set up an organization for the properties themselves, and will attempt to enforce the rights arising out of property in copyright, including the specific component rights of the copyright, the civil rights under it, such as the right of free speech, equal application of the laws, etc., and the human rights of the creator.

It will seek to end the present practice of copyright dismemberment, whereby the author gives up a valuable list of rights to publishers, to magazines, picture studios, and still others to such corporate interests as the radio advertisers, until in the end he owns no part of his copyright at all. It will do this under its "authority" to execute transactions, and will refuse to sanction the severance of any right from the copyright by outright sale. It will sign for lease, license, or authorization only, and for a maximum period of seven years.

However, it will merely exercise legal ownership, as trustee, and actual ownership will still reside in the author, he being fully protected by the legal principle that *copyright must stem from the creator*.

Figuratively speaking, the Authority will be a literary bank. Authors will deposit copyrights and ownership, and will draw 'checks' against their deposits, for movie rights, publication rights, and the like.

It will maintain for the author a record of all transactions made under his work. As holder of the legal title it will act on behalf of the

the SCREEN WRITER

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD
AT 1655 NORTH CHEROKEE, HOLLYWOOD 28, CALIFORNIA

Says NUNNALLY JOHNSON, *novelist, short story writer, motion picture writer and producer*: "THE SCREEN WRITER seems to me to have the liveliest and most worthwhile contents I've ever seen in a professional magazine.

★

Says ARCHER WINSTEN, *famous New York Post columnist*: "THE SCREEN WRITER . . . that cinematically indispensable publication of the Screen Writers' Guild."

★

COMING ARTICLES: THE CRAFT OF THE SCREEN WRITER, BY DALTON TRUMBO; TWICE-SOLD TALES, BY MARTIN FIELD; MINORITY GROUPS ON THE SCREEN, BY LOUIS ADAMIC; ASSIGNED TO TREASURY, BY JAY RICHARD KENNEDY; THE SCENE IN FRANCE, BY VLADIMIR POZNER; REPORT FROM ENGLAND, BY ROGER BRAY; UNESCO AND THE WRITER, BY HERBERT MARGOLIS, and others.

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WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

An Action Program

To present the A. A. A. to the Authors League for formal and immediate consideration, the following program of action is suggested for all members of the League:

- (1) Fill out the questionnaire on Page 64.
- (2) Ask your Guild (or its regional office) for an immediate meeting to discuss A. A. A. and to recommend early action by the Council of the Authors League.
- (3) Ask your Guild to petition the Council of the Authors League to establish an early "stop date" — or deadline — when the present licensing rule, already authorized by the League, becomes effective.
- (4) Ask other writers, not currently affiliated with the League, to join the appropriate guild and fill out the questionnaire on Page 64.
- (5) Pass this copy of the A. A. A. plan on to other writers in your neighborhood. Additional copies can be obtained from the Screen Writers Guild on request.

Authors' League of America
6 East 39th St.
New York 16, N. Y.

Radio Writers' Guild
6 East 39th St.
New York 16, N. Y.

(Middle Western)
203 North Wabash Ave.
Chicago 1, Ill.

(Western)
1655 North Cherokee
Hollywood 28, Calif.

Authors' Guild
6 East 39th St.
New York 16, N. Y.
or 1655 North Cherokee
Hollywood 28, Calif.

Dramatists' Guild,
6 East 39th St.
New York 16, N. Y.
or 1655 North Cherokee
Hollywood 28, Calif.

Screen Writers' Guild
1655 North Cherokee
Hollywood 28, Calif.

the SCREEN WRITER

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UNESCO AND A FILM STUDENT EXCHANGE PLAN: A Symposium of Hollywood Opinion

HERBERT F. MARGOLIS

THE large measure of international cooperation achieved in the film courses at the Army University Center in Biarritz, France, prompted me to investigate the possibilities of initiating a broader, more comprehensive plan for a world-wide exchange of film students to be administered through the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.*

Educational exchange plans are not innovations. Students in the sciences, arts, and engineering, from many European countries, have participated in limited exchange projects with the United States which

*Brief versions of this plan have been published in the New York Times and the Hollywood Quarterly, and are scheduled to appear in foreign film publications. THE SCREEN WRITER presents the plan in greater detail in order that all branches of the American film industry may have opportunity to make a collective study of it.

HERBERT MARGOLIS is a screen and radio writer. While in service he helped organize the film program at the Biarritz Army University and taught courses there. He is now American Editor of the Penguin Film Review, a new British Quarterly.

have been in operation for years; some under private sponsorship, others (especially during the war) under Government aegis. But there has never been any large-scale attempt to organize similar projects in the film field.

After a series of stimulating conferences in London and Paris with eminent film educators and technicians an outline proposal was drafted. This was accepted in principle by the British Film Institute (National Film Library and Research Center of England), The Association of Cine-Technicians (National British Film Trade Union), Cinémathèque Française (National French Film Library and Research Center), the Syndicat des Techniciens de la Production Cinématographique (National French Film Trade Union), and the Institut des Hautes Etudes des Cinématographique (The new Paris School of Motion Pictures).

The Soviet Cultural Attaché in Paris also voiced considerable interest but preferred to withhold official comment until the plan should assume concrete form.

The proposal tentatively calls for a continuous yearly rotation of film students to England, France, America, and the U.S.S.R. Small units of not more than twenty students, democratically chosen by the sponsoring organizations, would be rotated for three to four month periods of film study in each of the four countries. Whether the student groups would be composed of undergraduate film majors or young technicians in the industry or a combination of both would largely depend on the prevailing educational conditions in the various nations.

In America for example there would be over 4000 eligible students either majoring in a four-year film curriculum at New York University, University of Southern California, University of California at Los Angeles (beginning this fall) or taking individual elective film courses offered in some 30 universities and colleges throughout the country.

In England the situation would be slightly different. As yet no regular curriculums in films are available, though Mr. Korda has given Oxford University a considerable grant for the purpose of initiating a series of film courses. But the British Film Institute does offer occasional summer seminars in films, and the British Film Industry and Documentary Film Units have employed a sizable amount of young

talent in somewhat of an on-the-job-training apprenticeship capacity. France and Russia could draw upon the student bodies of their established film universities for exchange groups.

In London the British Film Institute would prepare the curriculum in cooperation with other necessary bodies. Specialists selected from The Association of Cine-Technicians would form the staff of guest lecturers. The Cinémathèque Française and the Paris School of Motion Pictures would follow the same procedure, securing professional teachers on a voluntary basis from the ranks of the French technicians. Kenneth Macgowan has already expressed a willingness to incorporate the student exchange proposal into the contemplated film program at UCLA, if UNESCO would undertake to finance the project.



Due to the limited time, the courses would have to be of a general survey type, especially arranged in emphasis to acquaint the visitors with: (1) the practical conditions of film production peculiar to each country; (2) the national culture and characteristics of the nation's movie-going public; and (3) a more than cursory history of the country's film techniques and aesthetics.

This hybrid combination of practical and theoretical courses proved to be a very successful method of teaching foreign students both at Biarritz University and at the Paris School of Motion Pictures.

Upon completion of this cycle, the groups would gather in short seminar session to analyze and synthesize the results of their observations. Thus the young students, in addition to acquiring an invaluable cultural background, would return to their own national films with an invigorating international understanding of their medium. Such continuous mental stimulus must inevitably engender new, imaginative talents, and through them, kindle higher artistic standards in the various film crafts.

Naturally, the plan as it stands today, is in an embryonic stage. Above all, it needs a qualified American organization to sponsor it, and secure the aid and advice of the Hollywood film industry and the film

guilds and unions. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, because of its position of respect in the industry, has been suggested by many as perhaps the most logical sponsor.

Once the American sponsorship is set, a definite plan of action acceptable to the English, French, and Soviet bodies must be outlined. This would then be submitted through each country's representative to the UNESCO conference for ratification. Preliminary inquiries in London and Paris indicate that UNESCO would look most favorably upon such a project.

Through its offices the vital administrative machinery could be put into operation, and the problems of housing, international travel and finance could be ironed out. In preference to specific allocation of monetary grants, each participating nation could agree to assume the financial responsibility for maintenance of the exchange students as long as they remain in that country. This program of reciprocity could eliminate some of the financial worries which usually attend these undertakings.

Obviously, the potential ramifications of this proposal are enormous. If initial experiments succeed, soon students from all nations affiliated with UNO can join in an extended rotation program. It would also facilitate the establishment of other contemplated international schemes such as film libraries, film research centers, technician forums, and expanded cinema festivals.

Some will undoubtedly ask, "Is the plan feasible?" A better question is, "Will it ever be more feasible?" Today we have in UNESCO an international organization dedicated to "... promoting and encouraging a wider exchange of educational, scientific and cultural information among nations." We have the benefit of earlier experiences in educational exchange projects to guide us. We have definite European backing from England and France. We will have soon two universities, USC and UCLA, as potential American bases for instruction to the foreign exchange groups, both in the backyard of the American Film industry. In the past Chinese, Chilean, Arabian, and Mexican students have studied at New York University. At present a group of Indian students are majoring in educational films at USC. So there are even motivating precedents for the traditionalists. Intelligent leadership can make this

plan as feasible and practical as the other educational projects which have preceded it.

Of course there is the other popular stymie that is brought up sooner or later: How can you **teach** Motion Pictures? One is almost tempted to answer, "Well it isn't easy." Indeed it isn't. You certainly cannot "teach" a person how to "create" if he doesn't have some ability to begin with. But guidance and training can mature a talent and give it needed direction. One of the unhappier aspects of the present Hollywood system has been its general reluctance to develop any organized procedure for training new personnel beyond the haphazard trial and error method.

Though every other major artistic field — literature, music, art, dance — demands serious periods of study as a prerequisite to proficiency, the attitude of some men in the industry and of many hesitant educators outside the industry has impeded any progress toward building a constructive program of film training. They have exhibited a deplorable lack of respect for the skills and abilities involved in the film crafts. The old motto — "If you can write a novel, or direct a play, we can make a great screen writer or a great film director out of you in **no time**," still prevails. Yet the records would seem to disprove these rash assertions. A glance at any list of men generally conceded to be tops in the film fields, like Capra, Stevens, Ford, Wyler, Lang, Nichols, Milestone, Lubitsch, Hitchcock, reveal that most of them reached their present-day positions only after hard, long apprenticeships in various phases of film-making.

Of late the spread of serious film study to more and more educational institutions seems to have partially destroyed this popular myth that people are just born with fully developed film talents. Maybe our Lana Turners and Betty Grables are, but not all of us have been so fortunately equipped with such discernible "native" talent by nature.

The young writer, especially, has much to gain from any type of exchange plan. By the very nature of our medium today, the writer through his screen play creates the content of the film, which is still the heart of a picture. But the writer, as well as the director, needs the stimulus of experience to create truthfully and honestly. One can dip into research books for all the technical details of settings and period

atmosphere, but the details of content and characterization involve an interpretation of humanity which cannot be gleaned from probing research books alone. It must usually come from the insight and maturity that knowledge and experience can breed in a creative mind.

Could MacKinlay Kantor have written his book *Glory For Me* with such tenderness, or Robert Sherwood have adapted it to the screen with such sincerity as *Best Years of Our Lives*, or William Wyler have directed it with such warmth and understanding, if all of them had not drawn from their previous personal experiences?

In the February issue of *The Screen Writer* Mr. Wyler has a rather emphatic answer: "I know that I most certainly could not have directed the *Best Years of Our Lives* as I did without the knowledge of the people and the background which came out of my own army career. But aside from specific knowledge and experience of war and fighting men, I think all of us have learned something and gained a more realistic view of the world."

The main emphasis of the exchange plan would be to expose students to knowledge and experiences which can induce mature thinking. Once the plan is in operation the young screen writers would have the opportunity of gaining: (1) a knowledge of the advantages and limitations of their craft; (2) organized training from experts (both foreign and native) in their field; (3) the experiences of associating with different peoples, acquainting themselves with different customs, habits, and cultures.

This exchange of ideas can stimulate a healthy competitive spirit between film industries and their creators and break down many of the barriers of misunderstanding that exist among the peoples of the world. In the shrinking distances of our atomic world these obstacles must be overcome if we are to search for a lasting peace. Has Hollywood, as a center of America's culture diffusion and dissemination, a responsibility in reaching for this goal? Recent statements by such practical and commercially successful men as Charles Boyer, Frank Capra, John Grierson, John Huston, Garson Kanin, Fritz Lang, Walter Wanger, seem to indicate that it has. In one form or another they have asked for a maturer international understanding in our present day entertainment films.

What better means to accomplish this end than through personal contact?

Sir Oliver Bell, director of the British Film Institute, best sums up those sentiments in these words: ". . . In the cinema mankind has an unparalleled agency for the promotion of international understanding and good-will between nations, without which no international political organization can be effective. We believe that, more and more, it will come to be used as an instrument in that direction by the United Nations, and few things can conduce more to that end than that in each producing company there should be a group who have had the privilege of studying in other countries. . . . In short, of being informed with a spirit of international understanding themselves. Such a spirit will inevitably be reflected in the films on which they work."

But before the plan can begin to materialize, before it can even be presented to UNESCO representatives for consideration, there will be valid questions to answer, pertinent problems to solve. Preliminary discussions indicate that the plan would meet with general approval in most Hollywood circles. But the task of gaining a clear, comprehensive picture of exactly where Hollywood industry and labor stand on this question is obviously the job for a competent organization. It is hoped that the Board of Governors of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences will consider the possibility of accepting sponsorship. Intelligent and dynamic leadership from such an organization could insure an early and active American participation in this program.



In an attempt to gather a wide variety of independent thought and opinion on this plan, copies were sent to various individuals and organizations in Hollywood for comment. Those comments which have been received thus far follow.

FRITZ LANG

(Distinguished director; President of Diana Productions)

I am sure that everyone who reads of your plan for an international exchange of film students will see its potentialities for encouraging new,

young talent, for improving levels of film technique and for promoting understanding among the peoples of the world. I should like, however, to stress a further benefit I see in it.

Motion Pictures, which appeal to both eye and ear, making use of everything on earth and in the heavens, which can show the whole universe or the limited subjective images in a single man's mind, are able to communicate to a larger audience than any other existing art form. This power to communicate imposes great responsibilities on the film creator, and foremost, I believe is his responsibility to understand and voice the valid hopes and aspirations of his own people, thus enriching the national culture from which he springs.

This may seem to argue **against** an international exchange of film students, but I feel to the contrary it argues very much **for it**.

At first, motion pictures from England, France, Russia, Germany, the United States, reflected the social and cultural life of those countries and possessed distinct national flavors. The increasingly sharp, commercial struggle for control of the world film market, a struggle conducted from behind ever higher nationalistic walls, resulted, curiously, in a blurring of these differences through the tendency by film creators to copy slavishly whatever film product was commercially most successful. This "in-breeding" resulted in a strange hybrid, labelled "Hollywood" but actually removed not only from Hollywood, but even from American life. So we have seen more and more "Hollywood" musicals from Moscow, "Hollywood" melodramas from England, "Hollywood" comedies from France, and like carbon copies, each succeeding copy is fainter than the one before it.

I feel a promising first step toward revitalizing the connections between film creators and their people is inherent in your plan for an international exchange of film students. These students will cross the high commercial frontiers to meet on the basis of aesthetic exchange, and such meetings will force the individual student to not only a greater appreciation of other people, but a rediscovery of his own. Through understanding of others will come self-understanding and a healthy national pride, furthering the production of motion pictures which say, "I, an American, a Frenchman, an Englishman, a Russian have something

to say to the whole world **because** I am of the American people, the French people, the English people, the Russian people."

This is, I believe, the only sound basis for a lasting motion picture art. No matter what borrowing of ideas or exchanges of techniques, the quality of great motion pictures will never be determined by techniques alone . . . but will derive from the hearts and minds of artists . . . the hearts and minds of proud, free citizens of free nations . . . who are **thereby** citizens of the world.

Needless to say, I think all of us who work in Hollywood should and will endorse your plan. For my part, I will be happy to cooperate when the plan materializes and look forward to welcoming exchange students to Diana Productions.



KENNETH MACGOWAN

(Former motion picture producer and now head of the Department of Theatre Arts at the University of California at Los Angeles.)

The proposal to exchange film students between the United States, England, France, and Russia is a healthful and a vital one. Backed by UNESCO, it means the breaking down of a little of that barrier of provincialism and self-complacency which stands in the way of international understanding in the arts.

Our students would learn something of the stresses and impulses under which craftsmen work in Europe, and come back with a broadened concept for the screen's place in a healthy society. European students would absorb more than our technical skills; they would sense both the opportunities and the pitfalls of an industry whose output must be entertainment and may be art.

With the support of UNESCO, the University of California could school these students through the courses that it plans in screen techniques. But without the cooperation of the studios, the men and women from the Old World could not gain the insights into film work and its American problems which are vital to their study. To ensure a proper

functioning of this project it is essential that the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences assume the responsibility of stewardship for UNESCO. The Academy can make this as successful and important an undertaking as it deserves to be.



DUDLEY NICHOLS

(Well-known writer, director, and producer)

I have only had time to study very hurriedly the plan for an international exchange of film students. It strikes me that Kenneth Macgowan's proposal is most practical — that is to combine the student exchange with the film program of the University of California. I am not quite clear about how it is proposed to finance the student exchange but it seems to me that this is something that could and should be undertaken by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. It certainly deserves a full examination by a competent committee from the Academy. The film is a world medium and the film industry of any one nation can only be invigorated by multitudinous contacts with film workers of other nations.

For health and progress we should do everything in our power to bring about cross-pollenization so to speak with students and film workers of other countries. We in the film industry must always endeavor to encourage new talent and train new people. Obviously the international exchange of students would work for the kind of international understanding that is requisite for peace and good will and progress.



DORE SCHARY

(Executive Production Head, RKO Radio Pictures)

Thank you for seeking my opinion on your plan for an international exchange.

The plan makes such sense and could prove to be such a contribution to motion pictures all over the world that I don't understand how

anyone can say anything except — "Let's see that the plan gets going right now!"

I think it would get monotonous if I kept saying for 500 words exactly what I have said in the previous paragraph.

I see no reason why the studios would not open their doors and allow the students to come in and view production that often. I would certainly feel that way about it at RKO.



GEORGE STEVENS

(One of the leading comedy director-producers in Hollywood.
President of the Directors Guild.)

There can be no question that the plan for an international exchange of film students would have a most desirable effect on the general level of motion picture production throughout the world.

While it is desirable that films should continue to reflect the regional and national cultures of their places of origin, it is equally necessary that a constant inter-change of method and theory, as between the different film industries, should take place.

Already the gulf between the techniques used in different countries is wide. That it should continue to be so is both inevitable and desirable. But, that one section of this world-wide industry should remain in any degree of ignorance of the methods practiced by another, cannot be held to be of benefit to motion picture production as a whole.

By an exchange of film students, such as that proposed by Mr. Margolis, improvements and differences in technique that have been developed in the various indigenous industries would be made available for adaptation to the particular cultural and psychological requirements of each audience-group.

We in Hollywood frequently have occasion to admire the product of other countries, without always being able to analyze, with any certainty, that sometimes intangible element which seems most to evoke our admiration. Where this element is compounded of a technique, an approach or even of the "atmosphere" peculiar to the methods used in a foreign studio, it is possible that American students, with experience

in such studios and familiar with the differences in method, might do much to enable our domestic industry to maintain a constantly improving standard.

Some subjects may even lend themselves to a world-wide appeal, and consequently even of treatment, and in such instances the wide divergence of techniques and the ignorance of each other's methods would merely serve to limit the supra-national eloquence of the screen, which, it has often been pointed out, may become one of the principal channels of intercourse between the peoples of the world at a humane and cultural level.

The suggestion that the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences be used for this purpose seems a sound one, since this body is potentially well adapted to handle, on behalf of a central organization, the details of curriculum and training as far as the principal American studios are concerned. If the cooperation of the various studios were obtained, it is to be hoped that a more-than-theoretical experience of American methods could be made available to the students who come to this country as part of an exchange agreement. This is particularly desirable in view of the fact that the position of the student-observer, who stands on the periphery of a production but who has no functional capacity to fulfill, can never be a very satisfactory one.

It would be well, therefore, if each studio could be persuaded to accept, say, two students as temporary but functioning members of its own production staff. For example, if a student of camera technique could be placed as an extra assistant on one of the camera crews, he would be provided with a standing which the mere observer could never attain.

As far as the theoretical classes are concerned, it is noteworthy that many American directors and actors have already given their services as lecturers to students at the Hollywood Actors' Laboratory, and would doubtless be as willing to do the same for any scheme such as the one proposed for operation by, or through, UNESCO.

It is my earnest hope that this admirable proposal may be fully discussed and amplified, and set in operation along the lines suggested,

and that we in Hollywood may have the opportunity of welcoming the first batch of foreign film students at an early date.

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JEAN HERSHOLT

President, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

While I cannot speak officially for the Academy at this time, the program which has been suggested to bring about an exchange of motion picture students between the United States and foreign countries seems to me personally to be a fine idea.

Some of the problems that occur to me are these: What effect will such a project have on motion picture production in the United States? What part will producing companies be expected to play? What will be the cost of the venture?

Questions will also come from the guilds and unions: What status will be assigned these students in their relationship to studios? What effect will an exchange of scientific production methods have on the labor situation in the film business? Will education of these additional students create an oversupply of trained motion picture personnel?

As a progressive first step in Hollywood, I would favor the appointment of a committee representing all branches of the industry to investigate each phase, and to make specific recommendations to the Academy Board of Governors and other industry groups. This procedure would assure a realistic approach and would help toward the establishment of a practical and effective program.

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THE SWG SHORT-PLAY AWARD

Definite announcement will be made in next month's issue of THE SCREEN WRITER concerning the SWG Short-Play Award project formulated some time ago by the Special Program Committee. The Committee regrets that unforeseen circumstances have resulted in this long delay, and expresses gratitude for the cooperation of all members who have sent in manuscripts.

A D U L T O R A D U L T E R A T E D ?

V L A D I M I R P O Z N E R

LET'S imagine a French film about the American Revolution, opening with a pan shot of New York — complete with Rockefeller Center. It has been done, except that New York was Paris, Rockefeller Center was the Eiffel Tower, the Revolution was French, and the film American.

We could also visualize a melodrama in which one of the main characters would be the Governor of the State of Alaska, dressed up in a National Guard uniform. I somehow feel he couldn't fail to develop a beautiful friendship with the prefect of Casablanca — city which has no prefect — sporting the uniform of a petty customs official.

Some people may argue that such pictures are characteristic of the Hollywood approach to the outside world. They may say that the motion picture industry holds geography and history in equal contempt, and that, under the circumstances, it seems a pity to spend money on research departments and technical advisers. Personally, I don't think that is the main reason why, more often than not, American pictures can't be shown in countries they attempt to portray. An audience won't mind seeing a uniform where there shouldn't be one, if it is sufficiently interested in the man who is wearing it, if it recognizes that man, recognizes him as a man, as a human being. French prefects save their

SWG member VLADIMIR POZNER is the author of several novels, including *Bloody Baron*, *The Edge of the Sword*, and *First Harvest* and was a nominee this year for an Academy Award. He based a recent talk before a SWG Special Program Committee event on the material in this article.

very distinguished uniforms for official occasions. What of it, if Claude Rains is a great actor portraying an almost credible character.

Unfortunately, that is not always the case. Too often, Hollywood confuses the two meanings of the word "outlandish," and seems to believe that everything that's foreign is strange, which in turn leads to some pretty distorted notions.

Let's take France again. If we were to study all the American pictures devoted to France and use them to draw a map of that country, it would look something like this:

A huge place made of sidewalk cafes, artists' studios and more or less reputable nightclubs, and known as Paris. Connected with it by means of a dissolve, the gambling casino of Monte Carlo which used to be surrounded by gardens until suicides were banned from the screen. Further in the background, thousands of castles, preferably referred to as "chateaux." At some undetermined point, a cobblestone-paved square with a horse carriage, a policeman, two men with whiskers, a beret-toting artist, a peasant girl with a kerchief over her hair, another man with whiskers, and a sidewalk café where one stops on the way from Paris to the castle or from the castle to Monte Carlo. Beyond that, the wilderness, populated by the Foreign Legion. Beyond the wilderness, a mysterious continent, known as Devil's Island, and presumably deserted, considering the high rate of successful escapes. There are also Chamonix, the Mont Blanc, and the winter sports, but on our map they would be located in Switzerland.



There is nothing wrong with the castles or the Monte Carlo casino, except that very few Frenchmen live in the one or gamble in the other. But millions of Frenchmen go to the movies, and the France they see on the screen is not the France they know. At times, the discrepancy may become embarrassing, and even offensive. During the war, for instance, quite a few Hollywood pictures have been made about the French Resistance movement, and the Free French. Nothing could be better, and the French people should be very pleased and proud that their fight attracted the attention of the American movie-makers. What

did happen, however, was that most of these pictures will never be released in France, and the few that were shown there were booed by the audience — because Hollywood had nothing to work with but its own map of France, and picked its Underground leaders almost exclusively among escapees from Devil's Island or criminals about to be guillotined.

As long as Hollywood will consider the foreign countries as a source of "outlandish" stories which couldn't have happened here, American pictures will run the risk of being criticized, attacked and booed abroad.

I don't believe that Hollywood acts that way out of sheer ignorance, or contempt for the outside world. I am convinced that most pictures with a foreign locale are conceived, planned and executed with as much care, honesty and good faith as most films devoted to the American scene. I can't help feeling that the shortcomings I have just pointed out are but a part of a general pattern, a part necessarily magnified by the added difficulty of selecting the right kind of uniforms.

In other words, I don't think that a French audience will mind Cézanne greeting Emile Zola with a hearty "Hi!" — but it will resent — more or less consciously — the attempt to treat the biography of a great French scientist or writer as a success story, or to consider the struggle against the nazis as a glorified Western.

Imagine two pictures, both describing the same simple, everyday story of simple, everyday people, but one laid in France, and the other in this country, and made under conditions prevalent in Hollywood today. They are shown in France, and everybody lauds the American story and makes jokes about the French one. Why?

Well, for one thing, the heroine, who happens to be a typist, spends her time changing dresses, one more stunning than the other. She lives in a hotel where she occupies a two-room suite — a bedroom for herself, and a parlor to receive her male acquaintances. Later on, she marries, and subsequently begets a child. She is in the ninth month, but her waist is kept completely under control. We dissolve from knitting to the cradle, and — but why should I repeat a story we all know?

Now, if the locale is France, the French audience just doesn't go for that picture. They know that poverty shows, and so does pregnancy.

They shrug, and they laugh, and they say in an amused or indignant voice, "Ah, ces Américains!"

But when they see the same story laid in the United States, they are likely to repeat, "Ah, ces Américains!" with envy and admiration. Because everybody knows that America is the land of plenty where secretaries do have luxurious wardrobes and hotel suites, and do marry their millionaire bosses. It is a strange land where suicide and adultery are never committed, but crime is always punished, a land where a couple who has been in love for many years without being married may not enter a bedroom, but where it is perfectly all right for a female agent of the State Department to marry a nazi suspect and go to bed with him in order to get incriminating evidence, a land which boasts more newspapermen than industrial workers, more gangsters than trade-unionists, more psychoanalysts than dentists — an altogether outlandish land!

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I don't believe the problem of pictures with a foreign locale is a separate problem. As I said before, the question of uniforms is a minor one. What really counts is, that human beings are basically the same the world over, and if a French audience rejects French characters as portrayed by Hollywood, it is not because their uniforms aren't right, but because on the whole Hollywood has not done right by the human beings. It is the same old choice between an adulterated conception of life as against an adult one. Solve the problem of showing reality on the screen, with all its nice and ugly sides, with all its dramatic and everyday aspects — and I mean, American reality, but complete and unadorned — and you will have solved the problem of not antagonizing the world.

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(Editor's Note: Turn to page 42 for further discussion presented at the SWG Special Program Committee's "international evening" concerning the worldwide factors affecting motion picture production today).

LYONS TALE: A REPORT

ALFRED HAYES

THE Hollywood Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals has elected to engage in the great political battles now more or less openly raging throughout the world, and the decision appears to have been, if I am any judge, rather a poor one. To combat "Communism" (there seem to be an enormous number of people in this country who have apparently never combatted anything else), the Alliance inaugurated a somewhat intellectual series of forums at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre in Los Angeles and for their maiden talk invited Mr. Eugene Lyons who, if not the most illustrious, is certainly one of the most persistent Russia-phobes.

Mr. Lyons spent some six years as a newspaper man in the Soviet Union; edited the American Mercury; and has always had, except for the hopelessly left press, no difficulty whatsoever in broadcasting his opinions about life, letters and politics in Soviet Russia.

With the possible exception of the war period when, from his point of view, the United States entered into an unfortunate military alliance, Mr. Lyons has always had the amplest sort of hearing. He was accorded the same friendly and attentive reception Feb. 11 at the Wilshire Ebell. Mr. Adolphe Menjou, the actor, was chairman; Peirson Hall, a federal

ALFRED HAYES, author of a distinguished novel, *All Thy Conquests*, takes up his earlier craft of newspaperman to report an oratorical event.

judge, said a few pertinent words about American Constitutional liberty; Mr. Roy Brewer, of the IATSE, spoke briefly of the menace threatening the country's trade unions.

A word about chairmen: may I suggest to the people who arrange these things that in the future it might be wise not to establish an actor like Menjou as chairman of the evening, no matter how distinguished his wardrobe? Mr. Menjou lent a touch of unfortunate comedy to what was surely intended to be a serious assembly of people who cared about the political destiny of this nation. How is one to take such a forum seriously when the chairman assures his audience that he himself heard Mrs. Max Lerner say she hated all rich people (a shudder ran through the auditorium); that Mrs. Lerner wore an expensive mink coat; and then, in a burst of girlish hysterics, exclaims: "I hope to drop dead if I am not telling the truth!"

If one is going to be a knight on a horse riding out to battle the red windmills, don't the gentlemen of the MPA think it a good idea to leave the Sancho Panzas home for the evening?



As for Mr. Lyons: his case against Russia, while possibly new for the provincials from Bel-Air and Pasadena, had a desolately stale odor about it; for we have been told before about the plight of the Soviet intellectuals; we have had spread out for us before the sombre details of the police supervision of art and science, the curtailing and persecution of the creative mind, and a glimpse, at nominal fees, of the intellectual darkness that exists east of the Carpathians. The history of revolutionary states has always brought with it a drastic policing of artistic forms, as well as the release of new artistic energies; and Cromwell's closing of the English stage, as well as the opinions of the French Equalitarians regarding the art of the Louvre, while, if not admirable, should be understandable to any student of standard history.

There has, as a matter of plain fact, hardly been a government in power since Alcibiades passed away and Lorenzo the Magnificent went into his family tomb which has not viewed the unrestrained freedom of art, literature and science with political qualms. Certainly, the Irish

Free State has never looked upon Mr. Joyce as one of its tangible national glories; and our own American experience is not distinguished by examples of governmental understanding or generosity toward our best creative spirits. Mr. Lyons, however, I venture to say, is not concerned with any such impartial view of the history of art and literature; his concern is with the political allegiances of writers today, and only with those allegiances which are left of center. The fact that a considerable body of American professional literary men have displayed acumen enough not to be complete political dolts and economic babes-in-the-woods infuriates him, distresses the MPA, and is in immediate danger of rupturing some of Mr. Menjou's more handsome blood vessels.

"You know better than I do," Mr. Lyons stated, "that the movie industry is more deeply infiltrated by communists and their stooges than any other sector of American life. This is no accident. The communist high command has concentrated its best agents, its best brains, its greatest efforts in this area . . ."

If the concentration is that heavy, and the efforts of Mr. Foster's party are that organized, it seems to me that Hollywood has survived that mass invasion remarkably well. The "agents" would seem to have been abysmally unsuccessful, and if I were in charge of the Party I would certainly change them. For, with the exception of the merest handful of adult motion pictures produced in the last decade, the average product tinned and shipped out of this "infected area" continues to repeat, despite the enormous activity of these "agents," the same sad legends of charm and infantilism which distinguished our cinema long before the MPA called in Mr. Lyons, and Mr. Lyons put his rhetorical finger on the caviar-and-champagne communists.

This is simply a useful fiction Mr. Lyons, Mr. Hearst, and sundry other art lovers have exploited. Furthermore, if one is to discuss seriously the undermining of the faith of the American people in democracy it hardly seems just to give the communist so large a share of the credit. One would think that the process was slightly accelerated by a few random economic factors; and that the industrial monopolists, the racists, the gentlemen who see the FEPC as an assault on the inalienable rights of the employer to hire only pure-blooded typists, should, I think, not be neglected when the honors are distributed. The real estate gentry

to whom the OPA is only slightly less sinister than the GPU should also, I submit, stand up and take their bows.

Perhaps however, the situation in the Soviet Union for the professional writer is as black as Mr. Lyons says it is; I have no way of knowing; but what Mr. Lyons has to say about the responsibility of the American artist is another thing and does concern me. I have been a newspaperman, a radio writer, and now a hired and paid-for screenwriter. In each of these capacities I have been a stooge, an agent, a tool. I was Mr. Hearst's beer-and-pretzels agent when I worked for the Mirror, but no indignation meetings were called to protest my daily distortion of the truth of American life; and no assembly hastily gathered to bewail my fate when I fed the microphone weekly hypocrisies in the name of an independent network owned by a not-so-independent private capitalist; and when I am compelled by the Breen Office to alter a few elementary sexual facts or to eliminate or soften a few elementary political truths, there is no midnight meeting of civic-minded citizens with a few hundred thousand dollars in the bank to defend me and my violated artistic soul. Where are the agitated clergymen, the aged ladies, the indignant actors, the federal judges then? Or is it that it's perfectly all right to steal, as the English say, the common from under the goose but not the goose from the common?



Mr. Lyons' fundamental mission in addressing the MPA was stated admirably by himself: he was glad the responsible people of the film colony (those middle-aged ladies with the chauffeurs waiting in the lobby?) were at last taking active steps to combat the infection of the cinema by unidentified Moscow dupes; and the only difficulty Mr. Lyons had was in understanding the protracted delay. Cheers, applause; but the shadings of Mr. Lyons' speech in which he strangely (because of some, I imagine, guilty twinge of conscience, since he must often find himself in the damndest company) tried to distinguish or separate the "agent" from the genuine liberal, the "tool" from the dupe were received in a dead and somewhat uneasy silence by his audience. For, after all, Mr. Menjou and the MPA are not interested in such fine dis-

tinctions. We are all equally monsters if we are not thoroughly overjoyed by the great vista of American monopoly control, and the way to help the poor, everyone knows, is through charitable contributions duly mailed at the end of the year in time to be deductible from income tax.

Dangerous? Yes; because finally, what Mr. Lyons is attacking is not communism, but democratic tolerance; and a word dropped in the right place adds to the already overwhelming anti-labor and anti-civil liberty shouts deafening the country. The agitated minister is reassured that any violation of free speech is countenanced, not only by God, but by Mr. Lyons, while the aged ladies need have no scruples whatsoever; and venom is reinforced, prejudice, ignorance, the narrowness of the wealthy idle given a poisonous logic. What they are being counselled to do will all be done in the name of the protection of the freedom of the artist by people whose idea of art is limited to a serious discussion of the length of time it took to read *Forever Amber*. Marxism and martinis was, therefore, not at all the subject of the MPA's lecture, but democratic tolerance most certainly was; and driving home to Bel-Air, Westwood and Pasadena the Cadillacs must have felt they had had quite a night of it.



IDEAS HAVE A TANGIBLE VALUE

Of interest to all writers is the suit tried in L. A. Superior Court recently, with CBS defendant in a case involving charges that an idea was appropriated from a writer. Composer Jack Stanley charged he had submitted an audition record to CBS, that it had stated disinterest, and subsequently had appeared with a show called "Hollywood Preview," similar in idea to that contained in Stanley's audition record.

There was no allegation of plagiarism; it was charged merely that

the network had appropriated the idea. The suit was based on the existence of an implied contract. Evidence revealed that ideas are valuable and that it is the custom in the radio industry to pay for program ideas. The jury found that CBS had impliedly promised to pay for the idea if it were used and that it had breached that promise.

The jury thereupon awarded the claimant \$35,000, the reasonable value of his idea.

— Radio Writers Guild Bulletin.

T H E L A S T P I C T U R E

RICHARD G. HUBLER

IT was a supreme honor. The Studio was to make the last motion picture in the world. There would be no more, this would be the final effort of the billion-dollar industry. It had to be great: for once, the production would live (which was a curious word to use) up to its advance notices. It would not care for the critics' opinions.

So they assembled the best talents in conference: writers, actors, directors, technicians. They lacked only a Producer and a Star but it was rumored in the Column that the Star was being imported from abroad. The Producer would be supplied later. So they went to work.

Primus supplied the suggestion from which Secundus got the idea. Tertius wrote the outline which Quartus enlarged into a treatment. Quintus made the breakdown into scenes and Sextus put the whole into a tentative first draft. It was Septimus who concocted the TEMPORARY INCOMPLETE final script; it was rewritten by Primus, Secundus, Tertius, and Quartus. Quintus supplied additional dialogue and Sextus and Septimus withdrew their names from the credit list and wrote sharp letters to the unknown producer. The letters lay for a long time on the exact middle of a desk across which Queen Elizabeth had embraced Essex, on which King John had signed the Magna Carta, to which George Washington had added an extra hidden drawer and from which Ivan the Terrible had hacked a bit off the corner. The exquisite surface of the wood gleamed in the middle of an enormous office with marble flooring and pillars with Corinthian carvings. It was an outdoor replica of the

RICHARD G. HUBLER, a member of THE SCREEN WRITER'S editorial committee, is the author of several books, the latest of which, *I've Got Mine*, was published recently by Putnam's. His new novel, *The Quiet Kingdom*, will be published this fall by Rinehart & Co.

Parthenon with some additions by the art director. The indignant notes were the only objects on the desk beyond a picture in a solid gold frame, turned away.

The director, whose name was Noumenon, took the POSITIVELY FINAL script, so stamped in red letters on the blue cover. It was untitled but everyone agreed it would be impossible to top it in the future. He assembled the cast but, of course, the Star was missing. It made little difference: the script was so written that all of it could be shot without the star. Noumenon started the picture.

It was one of the few productions that had, from start to finish, an atmosphere of pure harmony. There was no temperament from anyone connected with it. The lighting, though either so bright as to be unendurable or so dark as to be profound, satisfied everyone. The props, infinite in their number and stretching for a great many miles in every direction, were agreed to be superior to all of their kind. The sets, consisting of blank backgrounds of neutral color put together from cloth of exquisite quality, lent the whole an air of distinction that was quite unequalled. The cameraman, a man named Sincerely, agreed with the film editor named Quickly, that they could ask for no iota more of cooperation than they received. Truly, the projectionist, was very happy.

It was never decided by the Front Office — which did not interfere with the picture at any stage — how many reels would be shot or what would be done with the production once it was on film. As a matter of fact, the pages of the script were unnumbered and the sequences, though delightful, often appeared endless. But the picture was done very quickly, in a few minutes. Some said in seconds but their watches were wrong.



The rushes were superlative. Everyone admitted that and for the first time in the long history of the motion picture business each opinion was sincere and valid and important. Acting, camera, sets, lighting, direction, cutting, dubbing, writing — all the myriad activities which finally contributed to the ultimate product were admitted to be perfect. This was true. Even the janitor, Nadir, who swept out the stages (the

picture was shot completely on location) confessed that he had no fault to find.

But the picture was untitled. The Producer had not arrived. The Star was not present.

However, it was generally believed that the Star would be present at any moment. Everyone said so and they were seldom wrong. The Column also said so. At last the picture, all the reels of it, were packed into the cans of spun plutonium and placed upon the desk of the Producer in the midst of the indoor replica of the Parthenon. It was a magnificent moment.

The archbishop's chair behind the great desk was twisted so that it faced the west window. There was someone in it with thin shanks but no one remarked upon this because it would be impolite and besides many producers had thin shanks. He spoke, still unseen, in a hollow booming voice. Everyone heard it, the thousands of people who had worked on Hollywood's last picture. The words of the Producer went echoing through the marble pillars, the friezed doorways, the ultimate outside. They were distinct.

"Is it good?" he asked.

"Good!" they chorused.

"Do you love it?" he asked.

"Love it!" they replied.

"Is it beyond all imagination?" he inquired.

"Beyond!"

"Does it dazzle the comprehension?"

"Does it!"

The Producer, still concealed, paused. He spoke once more. "Is it stupendous, colossal, gargantuan, vast, enormous, immense, gigantic, fabulous, tremendous, brobdingnagian, polyphemed, jumboed, gog-and-magoded, mammoth, behemothed, leviathaned, polysarciaed, pinguited?" he demanded.

"Yes!" they shouted in unison.

"Pardon my inadequate vocabulary," said the unknown Producer in a tone of gentle courtesy.

"Does it have sex?"

"Sex!"

"Action?"

"Action!"

"Scope and sweep?"

"Sweep!"

"Drama?"

"Drama!"

"Motivation and realism and romance and fantasy?"

"Certainly!"

"Does it mark an epoch?"

"Epoch!" they cried with marked enthusiasm.

"Does it have gimmicks?" The questions were coming faster and the crowd in the Producer's office — which did not seem crowded at all — had hardly time to answer them. "Comedy? Pace? Social significance? Showmanship?"

"Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes!" came the full-throated bay.

For a second time the hidden Producer paused. "Is it box-office?" he whispered. They could barely hear him.

"Yes," they breathed in a sigh, "yes."

The Producer put his hands on the arms of his chair. For the first time they saw him. They were artistic, long and bony — the sure sign of aesthetic understanding in the finest sense.

Roger Certainly, a reporter from the wire services, stepped forth. He had nothing to lose except a certain income in unmarked bills from George "Hot" Flash, head of the publicity department.

"But," he said boldly, "the picture has no Star. And it has no title."

"True," muttered the mass of people behind him, those who had confected the masterpiece of masterpieces. "True."

"That," said the anonymous Producer firmly, "is because you are unionized." This startled everyone so much that they hardly noticed as the Producer swung around. "I have come to dissolve the unions, to give you a Star, and put the title to the script." He placed a hand on the radiant cans of plutonium. It was at this point that all noticed that the Producer was wearing a black hood — all except Certainly who was taking notes. This caused no stir because the Column had said this particular Producer was something of an eccentric.

"There will be no preview," said the Producer, "because I do not

care for others' opinions. There will be no distribution because I do not believe in theatres, though I own them. But everyone will know this picture. I shall play the lead myself and I shall tell you the title now."

The Producer, with a negligent gesture, pushed back his hood. With pleasure, the assembly noted the lean photogenic jaw, the fine set of perfect teeth, the massive forehead and deep, sensitive eye-sockets. The Producer was absolutely bald but a toupee could remedy that.

"Perfect! The perfect type for the star! And a box-office draw that no one will ever be able to surpass!" exclaimed Primus, Secundus, Tertius, Quartus, and Quintus; cried Noumenon, Sincerely, Quickly, Truly (in on a temporary pass), and Nadir who was standing on a gilt Louis XIV chair in the rear. Flash merely looked up at the ceiling in ecstasy: this was the dream of a publicity man. It was only Certainly, the reporter, who frowned.

"I've seen you someplace before," he said to the Producer. The Producer nodded. It did not seem important to the great man. He continued addressing his employees while Certainly continued to frown in uncertain memory.

"I shall show you the best side of my face," the Producer said. He turned the picture with the solid gold frame about so that it faced the others. "Look," he said.

They filed by, one by one, men, women, children, hermaphrodites and homosexuals as well. They were lost in admiring bliss which was genuine and had nothing to do with their jobs or a raise in pay. Last of all, Certainly, who never neglected anything, spied into the frame. "Very good," he murmured although the picture was a curious sort of mirror that seemed to strip the flesh from the face. Certainly had to shudder when he considered how many jowls were lying about the Producer's office.

"Now," resumed the Producer, "I shall tell you the name I have chosen for the picture, the last picture in the world. I shall whisper it to one of you and he shall pass it along." The Producer leaned over to Noumenon, who happened to be nearest, and breathed a word into his ear. Instantly Noumenon bellowed with laughter, so much so that he could barely pass the title to the next. In a moment the whispered title had

spread to the rear of the room: nothing could be heard but roars of glee, titters of titillation, childish gurgles. The title struck everyone the same way. The Producer swept the letters of Sextus and Septimus into the wastebasket — carved out of a single white bushel-size diamond — without reading them.

The Producer raised his white bony hands in the gesture of a minister invoking prayer. "Let the picture be released," he said. "**Nunc dimittis.**"

The assemblage bent their heads and commenced to file out. Last of all went Roger Certainly, shaking his head. "I've seen him someplace before," he muttered. Then, with the air of a man dismissing a fruitless idea, he brightened. "The hell with it," he said. "I've got my story." He looked back to see the Producer still sitting rigid in his chair. For a moment Certainly almost remembered but the memory went too fast. He shrugged and left.

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IT HAPPENED IN FRANCE

In a French studio a few weeks ago Transcontinental Films was shooting, in conjunction with Columbia, a picture titled *The Devil in His Blood*. An incident occurred — and Louis Daquin, secretary-general of the Union of Film Production Technicians, suggests in a letter to SWG that American screen writers may be interested in it.

This was the incident: the producer (he is described by Mr. Daquin as "a certain Monsieur Graetz, an American citizen") decided after 12 weeks of shooting to make substantial changes in the screenplay as set up by the film's director, Claude Autant-Lara, who is also co-author of the screenplay.

Says Mr. Daquin: "Graetz claimed that the producer of a film always controls all rights over its filming. This point of view was not shared by Writer-Director Autant-Lara. Nor was it shared by our several unions. We took a clear position in defense of the writer-director."

So a certain Monsieur Graetz, domiciled in the Hotel Georges V in Paris, received a letter from the Film Technicians' Union, the National Union of Writers and the Association of Film Directors. The letter contained an expression of the most tender sentiments of all these unions for Monsieur Graetz, and notice that if the film were not made in accordance with the creative ideas of its director-writer, it would not be filmed at all.

Next day shooting resumed along the original story line. Mr. Daquin concludes: "We are certain you will be happy to know, dear American colleagues, of the outcome of this action, and we ask you to believe in the expression of our most fraternal sentiments."

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REACTIONS TO AUDIENCE REACTION

RANALD MACDOUGALL

AS a writer whose work has been subjected to tests similar to those of Dr. Gallup so ably described by Robert Shaw in the March issue of *The Screen Writer*, I feel that a few additional words on the subject might be in order.

Early in 1942, the Columbia Broadcasting System for which I then worked, cooperated extensively in the development of the mechanical system of audience testing of which Dr. Gallup's method is a fairly faithful imitation. It was invented, I believe, by Dr. Paul Lazarsfeld, and required the test audience to indicate their approval or lack of it by pressing tiny buttons that graduated their reactions from "like" to "dislike." Not pressing the buttons at all indicated indifference.

It seemed a trifle absurd to me that this system was applied to a series of documentary programs I was then writing about the Resistance movements in various of the German occupied countries. No one, myself included, was meant to "like" these programs. They were meant only as information, and usually were pretty grim. However, the series went under the careful scrutiny of this mechanical monster, and the results are enough to frighten me for all time.

A writer has one advantage at least over researchers scientifically breaking down his work . . . the writer knows his dramatic intent in writing a given scene in a certain way. The researcher not only doesn't know, but usually isn't inclined to care. This leads to some rather gross errors of interpretation. For example, it is interesting to note that Robert Shaw reports that the charted audience reaction to *The MacComber*

RANALD MACDOUGALL, well known writer-producer under contract to a major studio, has written many of Hollywood's most successful screen plays, and also has a securely established reputation in the radio field.

Affair was an apparent apathy. As an old hand at reading such charts, this indicates to me, if not to Dr. Gallup, that the picture is a very good picture indeed . . . very moving and absorbing. How do I know? Because when the audience at such functions are swept away by what they are seeing, they forget to push those little buttons. Absorption, the intent of any good picture, therefore has a tendency to show up on the charts as apathy.



Another thing that will be discovered by writers who undergo this test, is that what they fancied as their strongest, most dramatic scene, will roll up an imposing score of "don't like." Fist fights, mothers slapping their daughters, the hero crushing a grapefruit in his loved one's face, the little boy playing innocently along the railroad tracks slightly ahead of the 4:15 Express, and any Hitchcock cliff hanger, are all going to register new lows in dramatic fare according to this fallible little mechanism.

On the series of broadcasts which served as my introduction to this machine, the apparatus broke down and had to be overhauled after the barrage of "don't likes" that hit it when we used a character who spoke the German language. And I would like to see (and offer a drink to) the audience that would register "like" to such scenes as appeared in *The Lost Weekend*.

Also there is a delay factor, which causes some interesting indications on the graph. The audience "like" reaction, if at all strong, is usually slightly retarded as far as button pushing or dial turning is concerned, so that as noted before, a moving scene will register nothing, and slightly afterwards a dissolve from a door opening to a door closing will appear on the graph as one of the finest pieces of acting this year.

There are other errors in the system. There would necessarily have to be in any system which requires a group of people to make instantaneous judgments on such a limited scale of choice. What finally broke down any remaining faith in the original mechanical tester, was such experiments as applying it with a bobby soxer audience to swing music, and then to symphony music. The reaction to swing was a fabulous percentage of "like." I will allow you to judge for yourself what the

reaction to symphonic music was, and this in spite of the fact that the radio networks had clearly defined evidence that good music is overwhelmingly popular in the United States.

I have no quarrel with Dr. Gallup, or his system of testing audience reactions mechanically, insofar as they apply their efforts to the promotion of pictures. The machine will most certainly help to produce what are a commonplace in radio institutional advertising, the "More-people-listen-to-blank-network-at-10:30-on-alternate - Sunday-evenings-than-any-other-network" school of hyperbole.

But it seems to me that a basic mistake is being made in the thinking behind the use of these tests, and a mistake which is deeply rooted in Hollywood. The problem of the motion picture industry, from an economic and artistic standpoint, is not necessarily limited to pleasing the fifty-six or eighty-four million mental bobby soxers, but how to lure into their neighborhood movie houses that high percentage of thirty-five year olders who aren't going.

If Dr. Gallup's estimate of fifty-six million movie-goers is correct, a simple mathematical process indicates there are approximately eighty million non-movie-goers. That is quite a market. I don't think it will be captured by finding out what junior wants and giving him more of the same. We **know** what junior wants, and he gets it. Why not find out **what senior wants?**

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SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD STUDIO CHAIRMEN

COLUMBIA — Mel Levy; Ray Schrock, alternate.

MGM — Gladys Lehman, chairman; Sidney Boehm, Marvin Borowsky, Anne Chapin, Margaret Fitts, Charles Kaufman.

REPUBLIC — Franklin Adreon; alternate, John K. Butler.

20th CENTURY-FOX — Wanda Tuchock; alternate, Robert Murphy.

WARNER BROS. — John Collier.

PARAMOUNT — Arthur Sheekman; alternate, Jesse Lasky, Jr.

UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL — Silvia Richards; alternates, Howard Dimsdale, Ian Hunter.

RKO — Daniel Mainwaring; alternate, Bess Taffel.

' T A I N ' T F O R S A L E !

WALTER SELDEN

IF the social, political, economic, and merely life-and-death implications of atomic fission, the cosmic ray and biological warfare were all rolled up into one, they might have caused almost a tenth as much of a storm as has the American Authors' Authority.

And yet, with all the hue and cry that's been raised, all the accumulated venom that's been heaped on the head of this child still a'borning, one massively calm and conservative comparison has been overlooked. American business — American BIG business — has for many years been happily rolling up the profits from Authorities of its own.

Although it was somewhat of a stranger during the war years, the useful houseworker we're getting to know again as the telephone isn't ours at all; we just use it on a rental basis. This policy of the various telephone companies has been going on through the years, and never a word of complaint on that score has been heard reaching the home office of American Tel and Tel.

Close to home, too, is the fact that while many a protest has been filed against the companies which distribute motion pictures to which we may have contributed something, there seems to be unanimous consent that it's more expedient and perfectly logical to lease rather than sell them to the Radio City Music Hall, Grauman's Chinese, or the Bijou.

And I'd rather see a friend of mine make book on this than on Busher: any time you had your shoes re-soled or heeled, the machinery which helped to do the job was rented, not sold outright to the repair shop, by the giant United Shoe Machinery Company.

Many a smaller firm has followed this same pattern. The Ex-Cell-O Manufacturing Company, primarily makers of machine tools, branched

WALTER SELDEN, who writes from New York, has written motion pictures for MGM and carried his craft into the Armed Services.

out a few years ago into making the machinery for producing cardboard cartons for milk and other foods. Figuratively speaking, milk or some other fluid goes into one end of a machine, a piece of cardboard goes into the other and out comes a neatly packaged, paraffined and sealed container duly stamped with the name or trade mark of whatever company has leased, not bought, the machinery from Ex-Cell-O.

It would seem almost as profitable to have been president of International Business Machines as to have been — well, let's say the producer of Bells of St. Mary's. For many years Thomas J. Watson, one of the most highly paid executives in the world, has been leasing his business machines in a highly profitable fashion. Yes, the gold has been pouring into IBM for many a long year now, and with it not a word of protest, but adulation for astute management from happy stockholders.

The machinery which makes the cellophane wrappers on your cigar, if you feel up to treating yourself that well; the machinery which makes the casings on that last hot dog I hope you digested, — all leased; not sold.

Almost all of the items mentioned here are patented, or have parts or arrangements that are patented. In other words, someone dreamed up an idea and either he or someone else figured out that it was too good just to sell. Instead of that, they leased it, and perhaps sold outright some of the adjuncts that went with it, like the paper used in a complicated International Business Machine. And sitting here dreaming in the fading Manhattan afternoon, I find that paper dissolving into what I remember as "added scenes" or "additional dialogue." Yes, sir, lease the rights to use the basic product and sell, if you can, such additional material as it takes to make it work.

At a distance of three thousand miles I tip my hat to Jim Cain and his associates. I think you've got a highly logical, not to say hopeful thought. A man who creates a written work which can be copyrighted surely has something resembling in value the product of an inventor with a patent.

But you say that some of those writers are really going to try to do this — to have a copyright repository? That an American Authors' Authority may actually seek to lease rather than sell outright the copy-

rights of its membership? That if a story is written and made into a movie, its author should receive an additional compensation for its use in other media, or in the event that it be re-made or just re-issued as a film at a later date?

Why, man, that's the atomic warhead, that's the energy of the cosmic ray directed against helpless humanity.

Really amazing, isn't it?



SPECIAL PROGRAM COMMITTEE PLANS

Future programs have been announced by the Guild Special Program Committee, following the successful "International Evening" reported on page 42 of this issue, and the earlier evening analyzing Dr. George Gallup's audience research methods, reported in the March issue.

One of the new programs will deal with the writer-director, how he got that way and what it takes. Invited speakers, depending upon their availability, will include: Billy Wilder (Lost Weekend), George Seaton (musicals), Delmer Daves, Robert Rossen, F. Hugh Herbert, Boris Ingster and others.

Another program will examine the writer-producer and his place in the sun. Invited speakers will include: Dore Schary, Charles Brackett, Harry Tugend, Dudley Nichols, Don Hartmann, Nunnally Johnson and others.

Future evenings will consider what screen writers should know about cinema music, art direction and production design, cinematography, film editing and other related subjects. Experts will be invited as speakers, and, as is customary in all special programs, questions from the floor and full discussion will follow.

An evening in the near future will be devoted to Screen Writers and the War under the chairmanship of Jesse Lasky, Jr.; outstanding and hitherto restricted documentary films will be shown and there is a possibility that one of Frank Capra's unreleased documentaries may be obtained. Because of the increasing use of the documentary method in the production of major feature pictures, this study will be of special interest. The Robert Meltzer Award will be discussed.

Announcements of dates and places for these events will be mailed to the membership from the Special Program Committee: Howard Estabrook, Alexander Knox, co-chairmen; Claude Binyon, Ken Englund, Melvin Frank, Frances Goodrich, Albert Hackett, Milton Krims, Harry Kurnitz, John Larkin, Jesse Lasky, Jr., Richard Maibaum, Norman Panama, Stanley Rubin.

S I G N I F I C A N T T R E N D

ROGER BRAY

ONE day in the long ago when Hollywood was still striving with its adolescence and the screen-writer was a pure scenario-writer, circa Louella Parsons and *How to Write a Scenario* (Oh, yes, madame wrote the first manual for Essanay and the Chicago fans!), a very discerning leader, Colonel J. N. Selig, sat watching the final cut of Rex Beach's classic *The Spoilers* unfold.

"There! That's what I call moving literature!" said the Colonel.

"You're wrong, Colonel," said a quiet, authoritative voice from the shadows: "That's a yarn **which an author didn't allow a scenario-writer to tinker and fiddle with!**"

"Gosh, Rex, damned if I don't think you're quite right at that," replied the Selig.

"There ain't no think! That's fundamental!" piped the famous author. Then both men turned to John F. Pribyl, scenario-editor of Selig Poliscopes, and one of them said: "So long as you reveal what the author wrote, and not what someone thought he ought to have written, you will achieve motion-picture literature!" The basics haven't changed one iota!

But, in the intervening years between then and now, this new and vital art, this expanding craft, which has become a formidable industrial octopus, has survived its formative years and adolescence, has sown its wild oats, bartered its heritage in the market-places of the far flung centres like any other Prodigal, and today, rather shame-faced, yet still tardily, returns to the fold of basic principles — authorship, pure and simple!

Grover Jones, simple genius from Indiana, striving to make a stubborn producer see and understand that that germ was vital — the author's idea, and failing to do so, raised his hands to high heaven,

ROGER BRAY is a well-known English screen writer and correspondent in Great Britain for THE SCREEN WRITER.

groaning: "When, O Lord, will these guys see what an author sees! When that day arrives, mark my words, boys, you who write what you know, and feel, will be tops! But I guess I'll be with the worms in Indiana when that happens, if it ever happens! But, if it does happen, I'll write the sign-board announcement for St. Peter — or maybe, Abraham!"

Waldemar Young, Tom Geraghty, Bill McNutt, didn't they all bewail the scales that blinded the film moguls? Didn't they all feel that cramping hold: 'I want a scene like that one in so and so's latest' — didn't they all voice an inward yearning, a nostalgic hope that someday, sooner or later, producers would turn to writers and say: "Now, partner----"

The miracle has happened! And in our time, in our day, now!

And the victory belongs to a long line of stout-hearted men and women, some living, some dead: Grover Jones, Waldemar Young, Tom Geraghty, Jeanie Macpherson among the dead, and Philip Dunne, Howard Estabrook, James M. Cain, etc., among the living. These pioneers fought the fight which intrigued many an author to come west "and let's have a looksee" as Irvin Cobb once said. Because so many held the torch high, and literally died to maintain the magic of the 'story,' we are reaping the big chance now. Yes, the big guys are beginning to talk our language!

Samuel Goldwyn shouting that the cupboard is bare of ideas, and Darryl Zanuck agreeing, despite the words they use, are sore-footed neophytes who have reached the mountain-tops where clear vision reigns.

It has taken two world wars, and long years of enduring to make them see that we who write, do write what we feel, tell what we see, and better than most others, what others feel and see . . . and that what we write, feel and see, cannot be projected with feeling and integrity by a Story Conference of tinkers who pull against the germ-idea of the author's conception. Where there's no sympathy, there's no contact. That's basic, too.

The revolt of yesterday's great ones inspired the Preston Sturgeses and the Ben Hechts and MacArthurs, and their illustrious breed in the States to further revolt! And the Frank Launders and the Sidney Gil-liatts, the Carol Reeds, the Pressburgers and Powells, the Thorold Dick-

insons, in Britain, have been inspired to adventure with truth, too, because others fought the vanguard battles. The result is that stories are being projected with an integrity which has not only surprised the moguls, but has converted them to that which is basic: **A story is an inspiration, born in a writer's mind, not in the bank vaults!** Surprisingly, in Britain, a fat bank roll, personified in J. Arthur Rank, was the first to sense that a writer's job was to write, and to see that what he writes is transferred to the screen intact! And playing ball with the writer has paid dividends! The Seventh Veil, Henry V, A Matter of Life and Death, Brief Encounter, and the Rake's Progress, pay due honor to a modern phenomenon — **dollars and sense!**

There will be a digging into the vaults for the originals, as bought, now moth-eaten, and a corresponding burning of the re-writes and re-writes of re-writes which distorted the bought original.

The Trumpet sound in Europe came from the heights of Olympus last month when Sydney Box*, the ace-producer-director of J. Arthur Rank's monster Gainsborough Studios, himself a writer (he scripted Seventh Veil) and also managing director of the most prolific British outfit, proclaimed to all the world, but particularly to you and me, and all screenwriters, everywhere: as follows: (In Daily Renter's Annual, 1946.)

"I look forward to the day when people will wait for the new Screen-play by John Jones with as much excitement as they wait now for the new novel by Cronin or Hilton, or a new play by Rattigan or Coward. Until this happens, the film will be only a second-rate art form, and the writer for films a lower than second-rate writer!

"Can you imagine any serious novelist signing a contract which gives the publisher the right to alter, amend, change, delete, rewrite, shorten or lengthen, and generally vulgarize his work with the assistance of as many other writers as he thinks fit? Yet, writers whose names are household words regularly sign contracts which give film companies that right — writers who wouldn't dream of cobbling someone else's book, or someone else's stage-play, or allowing three or four literary hacks to alter three-quarters of their new novel, are gaily accepting handsome profits to do exactly that in pictures. To them, film-writing has never been serious work, with the result that film-producers do not regard writers as serious craftsmen."

That, fellow screenwriters, is from the horse's mouth; that is from the top-stable in Britain! Sounds like a dream, doesn't it? But where one convert arises, others will follow!

*SYDNEY BOX won an Academy Award for writing Seventh Veil.

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SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD, INC.

1655 NO. CHEROKEE AVE., HOLLYWOOD 28, CALIFORNIA
AFFILIATED WITH AUTHORS' LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.

OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE BOARD, THE SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD: PRESIDENT, EMMET LAVERY; 1ST VICE-PRESIDENT, MARY McCALL, JR.; 2ND VICE-PRESIDENT, HOWARD ESTABROOK; 3RD VICE-PRESIDENT, HUGO BUTLER; SECRETARY, F. HUGH HERBERT; TREASURER, HAROLD BUCHMAN. EXECUTIVE BOARD: MELVILLE BAKER, HAROLD BUCHMAN, HUGO BUTLER, JAMES M. CAIN, LESTER COLE, PHILIP DUNNE, HOWARD ESTABROOK, F. HUGH HERBERT, TALBOT JENNINGS, RING LARDNER, JR., RANALD MacDOUGALL, MARY McCALL, JR., GEORGE SEATON, LEO TOWNSEND. ALTERNATES: MAURICE RAPF, GORDON KAHN, ISOBEL LENNART, VALENTINE DAVIES, HENRY MYERS, DAVID HERTZ. COUNSEL, MORRIS E. COHN. ASSISTANT SECRETARY, ALICE PENNEMAN.

E D I T O R I A L

Following is a report made by the SWG Political Advisory Committee to the February 19 membership meeting. It concerns the perilous situation prevalent today in the labor legislation outlook. The report was made by Sheridan Gibney, chairman of the Committee, and is presented here as an editorial statement.

IN accordance with instructions from the Executive Board, the Guild's Political Advisory Committee has studied a number of anti-labor bills now being considered in committees of Congress. They are all designed either directly or indirectly to destroy labor's rights as set forth in the National Labor Relations Act, better known as the Wagner Act. One of the bills even goes so far as to call for the repeal of the National Labor Relations Act in its entirety.

Members of the Guild will recall that the NLRB was a powerful aid to Screen Writers in organizing our Guild; and that by virtue of its

democratic election machinery, our right to bargain for all writers in the industry was established. At the present time, this Act is under powerful attack both in Congress and in the press.

For example, "Free speech for the Employer" is demanded as one of the inalienable rights of United States citizens. This refers to a provision of the Wagner Act which forbids an Employer to use his working premises as a rostrum for airing his views on unionism. But since in all other places the Employer is perfectly free to speak his mind about unions: i.e. in private or public gatherings, in newspaper ads, on the radio, at Chamber of Commerce meetings, etc., your committee believes that the Employer's right to free speech is not curtailed by this provision; rather that the provision merely prevents the Employer from exerting an unfair influence upon workers during working hours in regard to their choice of union affiliation.

Mis-statements are also made concerning the nature of the "closed shop," in order to frighten the public into support of legislation designed to weaken the Wagner Act. In order to clarify the meaning of certain of the terms commonly misused, the following definitions may be of value:

1. OPEN SHOP — The Employer may hire anyone he chooses with no regard to union membership of any kind.

2. UNION HIRING — The Employer must hire his workers through the recognized union; but it is the union's right to decide which of its members shall fill the jobs. The Employer is obligated to employ the people the union sends.

3. PREFERENTIAL SHOP — When jobs are available, the Employer must hire union members first. If there are no union members available, he may hire workers outside the union; but these workers, upon being employed, must join the union.

4. PERCENTAGE SHOP — The Employer must maintain at all times a certain percentage of union workers. The Screen Writers Guild comes under this classification, being a 90% shop.

5. UNION OR GUILD SHOP — All Employees must belong to the union or upon being hired by the Employer must join the union.

6. CLOSED SHOP — The Employer may hire only people who are

already members of the union: i.e. a worker must become a member of the union before he can be hired by the Employer.

7. **CLOSED UNION** — The Employer may only hire members of the union and the union has the right to refuse to accept new workers to membership. (It is this right of exclusion or closed membership which is commonly and mistakenly attributed to the "closed shop".)

In regard to the current legislation, the Political Advisory Committee feels that many of the bills, being too drastic, will never reach the floor of the Senate; but others undoubtedly will. The following are the most likely measures to receive serious consideration:

S 133, introduced by Senator Ball, prohibits industry wide agreements. It also limits collective action to a radius of 100 miles.

This bill would make it illegal for us to act in concert with the Dramatists Guild and with other guilds of the Authors' League. Clearly, this bill of Senator Ball's would outlaw the licensing program of AAA.

S 105, introduced by Senator Ball, deals with the "closed shop." This bill provides "That no person seeking employment shall be required to join or remain a member of a labor organization in order to be employed or to continue employment."

This bill would outlaw our present Basic Agreement with the producers, which provides for 90% of the workers employed to be members of the Guild. Thus, the bill not only outlaws the "closed shop," but the "Percentage" or "Preferential" shop as well. If passed, it would destroy our bargaining strength and reduce the Guild to impotency.

S 123 would make the Guild liable for damage suits under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. According to its provisions, the AAA could be construed as a "conspiracy in restraint of trade." Guild officers, as well as individual Guild members, would be subject to damage actions in the courts.

SJ 8 would outlaw strikes. If the Guild went on strike for any reason, the producers could designate any other group they chose to represent the writers. Morris Cohn, our attorney, stated as his opinion that this bill would destroy the entire union structure of the nation.

S 55, introduced by Senators Ball, Taft and Smith, is one of several

omnibus bills, any one of which would make all collective bargaining a thing of the past. Its specific applications to the Guild are:

1. All unions would be placed under the Sherman Anti-Trust laws, which might prohibit industry wide agreements. As we have seen, such prohibition would destroy our plan for the AAA;

2. It defines supervisors and foremen in such a way that they might join unions but not be represented by them for purposes of collective bargaining. This would directly affect producer-writers;

3. It outlaws the secondary boycott, sympathy strikes, or any strikes called for the purpose of organizing. This provision would affect any attempt of the Guild to support the Dramatists Guild if the latter were to take action in refusing to sell plays to studios, and would prevent Guild members from refusing to work on plays during the controversy, or vice versa.

The Political Advisory Committee concludes that the bills referred to above, and others like them, are highly inimical to the welfare of our Guild; and therefore recommends that they be actively opposed by the Guild as a whole and all members individually. The Committee recommends further that we strongly express our demand that the guarantees to labor under the Wagner Act be preserved; and that we make our position known to the President, to Senators Downey and Knowland, to our various representatives in the House, and also to Senator Taft, who is Chairman of the Senate Labor Committee.

On the positive side, the Committee urges support of **SR 22**, introduced by Senators Wagner and Pepper. This bill calls for the appointment before March 15th of a commission to investigate the causes of labor unrest. The Committee feels that this legislation is designed to further the best interests of labor by seeking to find equitable solutions to the many employment problems now existing in our economy.

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Honesty, Courage as Box Office Hits

What is the present impact of Hollywood pictures on the increasingly vital overseas box office? How can we make American films exert a more constructive and friendly influence abroad? Why is good taste in making films also good business in selling films?

On the evening of March 4 approximately 200 writers, directors, producers and special studio representatives met at Lucey's Restaurant in Hollywood to discuss these questions frankly. It was a Screen Writers' Guild Special Program Committee event. Space limitations and off-the-record prohibitions preclude a full report, but the following is a digest of the evening's highlights.

ROBERT VOGEL

Robert Vogel of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer international department spoke first. He outlined briefly some of the traditional totems and taboos surrounding the American film export business. Good musicals, appealing pantomime and elementary action pictures best ring the overseas box office bell, according to Mr. Vogel. Of more dubious value, because they are incomprehensible to foreign audiences, are films raucous with the more violent forms of American jazz, and pictures portraying specialized American humor of the Will Rogers and Mae West genre.

VLADIMIR POZNER

SWG member Vladimir Pozner's wittily profound observations were based on an article he had specially prepared for THE SCREEN WRITER. (See page 14.)

WILLIAM GORDON

Milton Krims, assisting Chairman Howard Estabrook as master of ceremonies, introduced William Gordon, formerly of RKO and now publicity head and foreign relations expert for Universal-International. Mr. Gordon said in part:

"Let me tell you that for every dollar of motion picture revenue we receive,

forty-three cents comes from the foreign field. Forty-three cents out of every buck! Let's face it—without those forty-three cents, we're out of business. It concerns you as well as me.

"In any case, one thing I know—and that is that the writer is the chap who acts as the ticker to propel the body of this wonderful industry of ours. And by the same token, the writer is the guy who most readily should respond to ideas from without, and that's what we're interested in right now. The philosophy of One World has become a necessity with you who create all things upon the world screen. You write in English, yes, but you must portray pictures in a world language.

"Like it or not, we all are under the necessity of getting on that old Golden Rule bandwagon. Since we in our industry are concerned with one world, we are inexorably bound up with the job of seeing to it that we commit no fratricidal act upon our fellows in any part of the world."



As a student of the world film market, Mr. Gordon outlined the conditions facing Hollywood abroad. The old stereotyped racial and national characters are

out. They are box office poison. On the other hand we must depict American life on the screen with honesty and courage.

He cited two current examples of how this new point of view is affecting production. In one picture now shooting all servant characters had been written into the script as Negroes. That was changed when it was pointed out that hundreds of millions of people with black, brown and yellow skins resent their portrayal only as menials, heavies or comedians.

"Agreed that the maid in this picture was not a stereotype, a mammy," said Mr. Gordon. "Agreed that she was sympathetic, friendly, a credit to her race — but wasn't she to be one of only two Negroes in a film mirroring life in America? Did we have a singer suggesting Marian Anderson, a scientist suggesting Booker T. Washington, an architect suggesting Paul Williams, a writer suggesting Langston Hughes, or even a conventional Negro business man or woman? No — we had two Negroes — two servants. Do we remember the late war when our enemies propagandized the world to the effect that no person of color could aspire to a station in life above that of a menial in our democracy? And what about audiences in China, India, the Philippines, Malaya, Africa and, yes, Japan — not to mention Europe where color lines are hazy if not non-existent?"

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Mr. Gordon also cited a picture in which some knife-wielding street brawlers were characterized as Mexicans. Then somebody thought of the Mexican and Latin American box office. So earrings, bandannas and spangles were hung on the knavish knifers, and they were recast as Gypsies, on the theory that Gypsies are not nationalists. Mr. Gordon concluded:

"It requires no mystic to see that in this troubled world the countries we offend are going to stop buying our groceries. They're all at work setting up ways and means of competition. So why

not hang onto and improve what we have? We can do it. They all want and need our goods, and we want and certainly need their forty-three cents. If enough of them stop doing business with us, all of us will be going back to work again — in some other business."

JULES DASSIN:

One of Hollywood's most distinguished motion picture directors, Jules Dassin, said:

"It behooves us to try to understand our world, and the changes taking place in it. The people of Europe, Asia and Africa who form the great bulk of our international film market have been through the ordeal of a terrible world war — an ordeal most of us in America did not experience and fail to understand. The falling revenue from the foreign exhibition of our pictures is probably the measure of that failure in understanding. The last information I have is that the foreign income slice of the motion picture dollar is no longer forty-three cents, but thirty cents. That is quite a drop. Why did it happen and what is the remedy?"

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"It seems to me it is happening because we are not making enough pictures of the kind the world wants to see. Glamor and superficial slickness are not enough. I do not mean that we have to turn out heavy propaganda pictures, or produce celluloid tracts and sermons — that would be the kiss of death.

"I believe people will always want entertainment. But what is entertainment? Cannot truth and courage be entertaining? Cannot even light comedy be written and put on the screen to reflect not what is phony but what is human and real? Two such pictures linger in my mind — *The More the Merrier* and *It Happened One Night*. They were steeped in absolute honesty and reality. And they were entertaining. GI Joe had this wonderful

aura of truth. The Yearling has it, and The Best Years of Our Lives is a beautiful picture and a true one.

"Many of us have been entertained by a number of very fine films from abroad — Open City, made by an obscure studio in Italy, running well over a year in New York; Brief Encounter, made in England. Imagine what would have happened on the set here if Celia Johnson had appeared made up and dressed as she was in Brief Encounter, and ready to start shooting. We must show believable people, honest situations, honest actions. Let us remember that the biggest hit in France in 1945 was Action in the North Atlantic; the trend toward the use of documentary technique is enormous — it is having a powerful effect on all of us. Frank Capra's and William Wyler's documentaries made during the war were a great success in Europe.



"We must dig deeper into life, into the realities and aspirations of people's lives, and try to present them more truly. Mere glamor is no longer a sure-fire box office hit. In Hollywood we have worked on the theory that our heroines are supposed to be beautiful under all circumstances. We must remember that a woman is beautiful because of what she is, of what motivates her.

"Writers should try to free themselves from the safe, conventional story. Most of our big films are made from hit plays and best sellers, which may be a reflection on our screen writers but is more particularly a reflection on our producers who feel they must have the protection of a hit play or novel before they will produce.

"Given honest stories, the director must use his pressure in shaping, casting for human appeal, human quality. I think if we did this when our films are shown at Cannes in the next International Film Festival, they would make a better showing — in fact, would do fine.

LUIGI LURASCHI:

Paramount's production and foreign market consultant, Luigi Luraschi, agreed with the preceding speakers that foreign audiences had developed a passion for authenticity and realism on the screen. He pointed out that they deeply resent any American tampering with the story line of the great European classics of literature, or with the facts of history and geography. Any vainglorious screen emphasis on America's contribution to the winning of the war rasps foreign nerves. People in other countries are more inclined to snicker at or walk out on Hollywood pictures with background sets designed to represent foreign scenes. Mr. Luraschi said:

"Unless the picture is actually shot on the location of the scenes — in England if the scenes are English — it is almost impossible for us here in Hollywood to capture the exact flavor, background, sets, attitudes of people, etc., which will satisfy a foreign audience. It is more than just a question of putting the right signs up, and getting the streets right; it is a question of capturing the right mood. You don't necessarily make your scenes more realistic from a British standpoint by simply casting a British actor or actress in them.

"This problem is further aggravated by the fact that in this field the British are making some excellent pictures. We may disagree as to whether or not our audiences in the U. S. A. will go for these pictures in a big way. That is not the point under discussion. The point is that the British like them."



Mr. Luraschi emphasized that the British market can absorb plenty of American slapstick comedies. But he said the light, slick comedies and other pictures whose high technical brilliance is matched by their shallowness of content are running into serious audience resistance abroad.

"Their action is so implausible that the whole story goes out the window, and

foreign audiences get the impression that Americans are people whose outlook on life is very banal," said Mr. Luraschi. "Any of you who happened to catch pictures of this type overseas with a mixed foreign audience will probably remember a sense of acute embarrassment. It is not a question of Americans being more shallow in outlook than foreigners. It simply boils down to the fact that they have undergone an emotional experience which we were fortunate enough to be spared, and consequently their taste for realistic treatment is keener than ours.

"There are certain pictures that have been just recently made here that are already a very important step in the right direction, and will do Hollywood and America a lot of good when released abroad. I say Hollywood and America because it is a well-known fact that any cumulative irritation which movies engender eventually becomes an anti-Hollywood one, and from that an anti-American one."

JAMES WONG HOWE:

James Wong Howe, internationally famous camera man, spoke briefly on films in China. He said:

"Before the war there were not over 300 theatres in China. But I believe that with 16 mm. equipment films will reach all parts of China, and the time is not too far away."

LESTER COLE (from the floor):

"Our problem is to write for one world and to think in those terms so that when confronted with the problem we do not solve it by taking advantage of the most exploitable minority as Mr. Gordon reported was done in the case of the itinerant Gypsies. This could be easily transferred to substituting Jews.

GEORGE STEVENS (from the floor):

"We sound more like a group of exporting merchants than artists who presumably have ideas that are to be given expression on the screen. Isn't this enlarged awareness of the box office here and abroad dangerous? I believe the first British film to be shown in New York's Radio City Music Hall was written by a writer who did not have the American market in mind."

Mr. Stevens, who is the distinguished director now with Liberty Films, pointed out that if creative talent in Hollywood will worry more about getting honest, vital, courageous and human pictures on the screen, it can worry less about the box office at home and abroad.

GEOFFREY SHURLOCK (from the floor):

Mr. Shurlock of the Production Code Administration (Breen Office) remarked that it was encouraging to see writers, producers and directors meeting to discuss their mutual responsibilities. "I can remember when our office was the only one concerned with such questions," said Mr. Shurlock. "This meeting indicates the shape of things to come."

★

The hope was also expressed from the floor that production heads could be fully apprised of the discussion. From the chairman and speakers came the assurance that many executive producers were present, and that the studio representatives who spoke did so with the full knowledge and approval of their studio executive heads concerning their talks.

For a statement of future events planned by the SWG Special Program Committee, see page 34.

— R. S.

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N E W S N O T E S

★ Current programs in the N. Y. Museum of Modern Art's History of the Motion Picture series are: The Musical Film (I): Swing Time, April 4, 5, 6; The Western Film (III): The Texas Rangers, April 7, 8, 9, 10; American Film Comedy (XVII): The Old Mill, Nothing Sacred, April 11, 12, 13; Screen Personalities (V): Captains Courageous, April 14, 15, 16, 17; The American Documentary Film (I): The Plow That Broke the Plains, The City, April 18, 19, 20; Travel and Anthropology (VI): The Wedding of Palo, April 21, 22, 23, 24; The American Documentary Film (II): The River, The Spanish Earth, April 25, 26, 27; The Social Film (IV): The Good Earth, April 28, 29, 30, May 1.

★ The American Contemporary Gallery announces that from March 21 to April 17 it is having an exhibition of paintings by Harry Bertioia, an exponent of the abstractionist school. From April 18 to May 16 paintings by Edward Reep will be shown. Reep won the Gallery competition last September. The American Contemporary Gallery is at 6727½ Hollywood Blvd., and is open daily and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Fridays until 10 p.m.

★ SWG member Richard G. Hubler of The Screen Writer editorial committee has a new novel scheduled on the Rinehart & Co. fall list. Title—The Quiet Kingdom. His most recent book is I've Got Mine, published by Putnam.

★ The Big Yankee: The Life of Carlson of the Raiders is the new book by SWG member Michael Blankfort which has just hit the nation's bookstands. It is the biography of Evans Carlson, one of the most impressive figures to emerge from World War II.

★ Communique from SWG member Bart Lytton: "I shall be back in Hollywood in March after a nine month literary sabbatical in Bucks County, Pa., during which I worked on my novel, Jed

Adams, grew thousands of very unhappy tomatoes, and wrestled with and lost every decision to the good earth of a 23 acre farm. I think I even lost an acre; in any event, my neighbor's fences sure look closer to the north field than they did last year. And him a God-fearing man."

★ The Last Spring, a new play by SWG member Stanley Richards, was scheduled at THE SCREEN WRITER'S press time to begin a two week run at the Cahuenga theatre in Hollywood. This will mark the first stage performance for the play, which is billed as 'a' serious comedy."

★ Gordon Kahn, editor of THE SCREEN WRITER, has an article, The Gospel According to Hollywood, in the April Atlantic Monthly. Mr. Kahn is Hollywood correspondent for the Atlantic.

Ciro's

... most glamorous supper club in the country ... steeped in tradition, intrigue and excitement ... mentioned most often on radio programs and in national and local columns—where romances are born and feuds flare up ... where real-life dramas and comedies are written every night in the antics of the celebrated ... where cigarette girls get movie contracts and the waiters work as extras during the day ... whose use of products like a special blend of coffee or cigarettes, signify endorsement of such prestige that they become the subject of commercial advertisements in Time, Saturday Evening Post and other national magazines ... which has played Xavier Cugat, Carmen Cavallaro, Velez and Yolanda, Jean Sablon, Joe E. Lewis, Danny Kaye, Desi Arnaz, Duke Ellington ... which receives over one thousand requests a month for souvenirs ... known from coast to coast, over the seven seas, in every village, hamlet and town of the United States ... *Ciro's*, the world's foremost supper club, is looking for a good script for a major release.

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★ SWG member Henry Myers wrote the book for *Romany Rye*, which opened in His Majesty's Theatre in London early in March. The play is an adaptation of *The Fortune Teller* and *The Serenade*, and played in the U. S. A. as *The Fortune Teller*. New lyrics were written for the play by Robt. Wright and Geo. Forrest.

★ SWG member Malvin Wald's one act play, *Talk in Darkness*, has just been awarded first prize in a national one act playwriting contest sponsored by the Philadelphia Stage for Action. This is the seventh playwriting contest Mr. Wald has won in two years.

★ SWG member Arthur Strawn has sold *A Tale of Two Rivers*, a story based on trout fishing adventures, to Sports Afield.

★ The Peoples Educational Center, 1717 North Vine Street, begins its Spring Term the week of April 14th. The three screen writing courses will be led by Carl Foreman, Robert Lees and Stanley Kramer. Motion Picture Direction continues with Irving Pichel as coordinator with guest lecturers: Herbert Biberman, Vincent Sherman, Edward Dmytryk and others. Additional writing courses are radio comedy, journalism, creative writing, the novel and the short story. PEC offers a varied curriculum in languages, arts, social and labor problems, and economics.

★ Ziff-Davis announces for fall publication *The Sun and the Barrow*, a new novel by SWG associate member Edward Verdier.

★ ★ ★ THE MANUSCRIPT MARKET

LISTING THE AUTHORS, TITLES AND CHARACTER
OF LITERARY MATERIAL RECENTLY ACQUIRED BY
THE MOTION PICTURE STUDIOS

In identifying the form of literary material acquired, the following descriptions are used:

Book, a published or unpublished full-length work of non-fiction; **Book of Stories**, a collection of published stories or articles; **Novel**, a work of fiction of book length, whether published, in proof or in manuscript; **Novelette**, the same, but of lesser length; **Original**, any material written expressly for the screen; **Play**, produced or unproduced work in theatrical form; **Published Story**, a published short story or article; **Radio Script**, material originally written for radio production; **Screenplay**, material already in shooting script form; **Short Story**, short fiction still in manuscript; **Treatment**, preliminary screen adaptation of material already published in some other form.

NOVEMBER 1, 1946 TO MARCH 1, 1947

SAMUEL BISCHOFF

JAY DRATLER, *The Pitfall*, Novel
GEORGE SLAVIN, *Intrigue*, Original

CAGNEY PRODUCTIONS

WILLIAM SAROYAN, *The Time of Your Life*,
Play

COLUMBIA PICTURES

HELEN FAY BUSH-FEKETE (with Leslie Bush-Fekete) *The Big Two*, Play
LESLIE BUSH-FEKETE (with Helen Fay Bush-Fekete) *The Big Two*, Play
HELEN DEUTSCH, *Object Matrimony (But Is It Love)* Published Story

EAGLE-LION STUDIOS

PAUL DE SAINTE COLOMBE (with Katherine Lanier) Miracle of Jeremiah Jimson, Original
KATHERINE LANIER (with Paul de Sainte Colombe) Miracle of Jeremiah Jimson, Original

LESSER-SHOLEM

MICHAEL L. SIMMONS, The Green Eye, Original

FORTUNE PICTURES

HARRY J. ESSEX (with Barbara Worth) The Dark Bullet, Original Screenplay
BARBARA WORTH (with Harry J. Essex) The Dark Bullet, Original Screenplay

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER

ALAN R. CLARK (with Bradbury Foote) High Wall, Novel
MARGARET CRAVEN, The Spindle Age, Published Story
ALPHONSE DAUDET, Fromont Jeune and Risler Aine, Novel
BRADBURY FOOTE (with Alan R. Clark) High Wall, Novel
JOSEPH K. FORTMAN, Absconder to Win, Published Story
FELIX ISMAN, Weber and Fields, Book
BRUCE MARSHALL, Red Danube, Novel
F. VAN WYCK MASON, Saigon Singer, Novel
DOUGLAS MORROW, The Story of Monty Stratton, Original
MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS, A Family for Jock, Novel
MARY RENALT, Return to Night, Novel
IRVING STONE, Lust for Life, Novel

MONOGRAM

CHRISTY CABANNE, Until They Get Me, Original
GEORGE CALLAHAN, Bury Me Not, Original
GEORGE S. CAPLAN, Get That Story, Original
SCOTT DARLING, Untitled, Original Screenplay
MAURICE DUKE, Mayor For a Day, Original
HENRY EDWARDS, Getting Smart, Original
CYRIL ENDFIELD, Untitled, Original
DANIEL FUCHS, Low Company, Book
LEON GUTTERMAN (with Edwin V. Westrate) Smart Woman, Original
MARY MCCARTHY, My Wife Is Mine, Original
CRAIG RICE, The Big Story, Original
EDWIN V. WESTRATE (with Leon Gutterman) Smart Woman, Original
FRANCIS SILL WICKWARE, Dangerous Ground, Book

PARAMOUNT PICTURES

ELISA BIALK, Sainted Sisters, Published Story and Play (with Alden Nash)
YOLANDA FOLDES, My Own True Love (Make You a Fine Wife), Novel
ALDEN NASH (with Elisa Bialk) Sainted Sisters, Play
BILLY ROSE, Gentle Gaffer, Published Story
CHARLES SCHNEE, Angel Face, Original

LIONEL SHAPIRO, The Sealed Verdict, Novel
EVELYN WELLS, Jed Blaine's Woman, Novel

REPUBLIC

GERALD ADAMS, Sea of Darkness, Original

RKO-RADIO

BETSY BEATON, The Boy With Green Hair, Published Story
MAURICE DAVIS, Race Street, Published Serial
DALE EUNSON, The Day They Gave Babies Away, Published Story
ERIC HODGINS, Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House, Novel
ROBERT LABATT, The Long Tunnel, Original
GENEVIEVE HAUGEN NOSSECK, Stars on the Horizon, Original
NEIL PATERSON, The Captain Was a Lady (The Log of Christian West) Published Serial
JAMES POE, Close Up, Original
BELLA SPEWACK (with Sam Spewack) The Night Is Young, Original Screenplay
SAM SPEWACK (with Bella Spewack) The Night Is Young, Original Screenplay
RICHARD WORMSER, The Road to Carmichael's, Published Story

20TH CENTURY-FOX

PATRICIA COLEMAN, Moon Vine, Play
WILLIAM G. HENNING, The Heller, Novel
LAURA HOBSON, Gentlemen's Agreement, Novel
RUTH MOORE, Spoonhandle, Novel
RICHARD SHERMAN, Untitled, Novel
PRESTON STURGES, Matrix, Original

UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL

D. D. BEAUCHAMP (with William Bowers) Wistful Widow of Wagon Gap, Original
LEONARDO BERCOVICI, Lost Love, Original Screenplay Based on Henry James' Aspern Papers
WILLIAM BOWERS (with D. D. Beauchamp) Wistful Widow of Wagon Gap, Original
RAYMOND CHANDLER, Playback, Original
LILLIAN HELLMAN, Another Part of the Forest, Play
DOROTHY HUGHES, Ride the Pink Horse, Novel
SETON I. MILLER, Singapore, Original Screenplay
GABRIELLE ROY, The Tin Flute, Novel

VANGUARD

ANTHONY HOPE, Rupert of Hentzau, Book

WARNER BROS.

GERALD BUTLER, The Slippery Hitch, Novel
ELMER HARRIS, Johnny Belinda, Play
MOSS HART, Christopher Blake, Play
JERRY HORWIN (with John Larkin) Persian Cat, Original
NORMAN KRASNA, John Loves Mary, Play
JOHN LARKIN (with Jerry Horwin) Persian Cat, Original
H. C. PETERSON, Forty-Niners, Book

NEXT MONTH AND THEREAFTER

SHERIDAN GIBNEY	•	WHAT IS SCREENWRITING?
JOSEPH MANKIEWICZ	•	FILM AUTHOR! FILM AUTHOR
ROLAND KIBBEE	•	STOP ME IF YOU WROTE THIS BEFORE
T. E. B. CLARK	•	WRITER-DIRECTOR PARTNERSHIP
MARTIN FIELD	•	TWICE-SOLD TALES
JAY RICHARD KENNEDY	•	ASSIGNED TO TREASURY
JUDITH PODSELMER	•	FILMS TODAY IN MIDDLE EUROPE

And further articles by LOUIS ADAMIC, HUGO BUTLER, EDWIN BLUM, ARTHUR KOBER, LESTER KOENIG, STEPHEN LONGSTREET, BERNARD SCHUBERT, ARTHUR STRAWN, DALTON TRUMBO, and others.

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ATTACK ON ORGANIZED LABOR!

The Executive Board of The Screen Writers' Guild urges every writer to:

1. Study carefully the labor legislation editorial report on page 38.
2. Wire or write at once to your Congressman, your Senators, your legislature representatives and to Senator Robert A. Taft, chairman of the Senate Labor Committee, urging them to work and vote against the anti-labor bills.

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PRESERVE THE GUILD**

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Editorial	•	Report and Comment by
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T W I C E - S O L D T A L E S

MARTIN FIELD

TALES that are told twice usually lose in the telling. But in Hollywood, tales that are sold twice seem to gain in the selling. Writers would hail this phenomenon as a profitable bit of all right, if not for the sad fact that in most instances writers get nothing from the resale of their properties.

When one writer tells such a story about his own property, it can be an accident. When two writers relate their cases, they can still be shrugged off as happenstances. But when three, four, and more writers keen out the same unprofitable tale, it begins to take on a menacing pattern.

Records show that in the past dozen years this practice has grown in the industry like a snowball rolling downhill — with the writer, alas,

MARTIN FIELD, a member of the Editorial Committee of **THE SCREEN WRITER**, is a frequent contributor to the magazine. A screen writer and playwright, he is also a contributing editor to **Cinema**, a new monthly magazine.

getting it in the neck. Agents, producers and just plain speculators have been increasingly active in buying all rights to an author's story and then reselling the property, on occasion in so short a time as a week, to another purchaser at a substantial profit.

That the profit can be substantial indeed — to the extent of no less than one thousand per cent over the original investment — is shown by the reported history of a story called Chameleon. Thomas Monroe and Laszlo Gorog were the authors of this script. Over a period of time, Charles K. Feldman, an agent-producer, acquired various percentages of the story from Monroe and Gorog until he owned it one hundred per cent and they had received a total of \$15,000 for their work. Feldman sold Chameleon, which was now entirely his property, to Hal Wallis for a reported price of \$80,000 against a participation in the picture's profits.

Chameleon was transformed into the successful *Affairs of Susan*. The understanding is that Feldman eventually received a total of about \$250,000 for a property which had netted the original creators a total of \$15,000. Thus, monetarily, the traditional roles of author and agent were more than reversed.

Here is another twice-sold tale. It is all the more interesting and informative because in telling it we can take a peek behind the scenes and see for ourselves just how a "deal" was put over. In 1932 a major studio had a story board composed of story department people, executives, producers and contract writers. At the meetings of this deliberative body, stories and their value to the studio were discussed.

One particular story discussed by this board was *International House*, by Neil Brant and Louis Heifetz. When the story board decided that *International House* was worth about \$15,000 to the company, one member of the board perked up his ears. This information was very interesting to him because he had something in common with Brant and Heifetz — he was represented by the same agent.

This board member saw an opportunity to make some money. . . . Time dissolve at this point, using, let us say, the equivalent of time, which is money, flowing across the screen, away from writers Brant and Heifetz.

After a proper interval, the agent called in the two writers and told

them there was no interest at the major studio in their story, which they had written as a vehicle for the Marx Brothers, who were then working at this studio. Nor was there interest anywhere else, for that matter. After all, this was a depression and a story had to be damn good to fetch even cigarette money so you could stop rolling your own.

When this piece of bad news had been digested by the boys and while they were groping about at the bottom of the murky sea of rejection, the agent came up with a hopeful "However." "However," a person who preferred to keep his identity secret, happened to see the story and was mildly interested in it as a possible basis for a stage show of some kind. Anyway, the story was worth just \$650 to this gentleman.

Well, Brant and Heifetz figured, \$650 is better than nothing. Guess they'd been crackbrained to think the studio would go for the story. Let's take the dough. Promptly, writers Brant and Heifetz received a check for \$650. Minus \$65 for the agent's commission, each writer received \$292.50. The writers were so busy being happy over getting at least that much for their work that they didn't have time to get suspicious at the sight of the signature on the check. It was the name of a well-known and very high-priced motion picture attorney who was acting in behalf of the "unknown purchaser."

Now we cut to the story board member, he of the perked-up ears. A few weeks later, after the sale contract had been signed and the purchase check had cleared through, this gentleman marched into the office of the appropriate studio executive. He informed the executive that he now owned International House and would be happy to let the studio take title to it for the \$15,000 that had been set as its value at the story board meeting. However, the executive, who was prepared for this visit, set back our gentleman somewhat. He said that he knew the story had been purchased from the original authors for \$650, and since that was the case, the \$15,000 didn't hold any more. The two gentlemen wrangled a bit, and the compromise price was \$3,000.

The final box score: The agent collected commission on both deals, so he was happy. The studio saved about \$12,000 of the company's money, so the studio was happy. Our story board character had, in a couple of weeks, made almost five hundred per cent on his original investment, so he was happy. In fact, every one was very happy except

writers Brant and Heifetz, who, for their creative labors, got an original story credit on the finished picture which starred W. C. Fields — and \$292.50 apiece.

When Brant and Heifetz finally got hep to the resale, they brought suit against their agent. According to the law it is illegal for an agent to switch a profitable deal from one client to another, and it is also illegal for a wise cookie to pick up a couple of grand through buying a story and reselling it on a sure deal. However, for various reasons, the law suit availed the two writers nothing. SWG members who may find themselves involved in a resale situation should make sure to bring their cases to the attention of the Guild for appropriate action.

Admittedly Brant and Heifetz were not writers of wide experience who could smell a rotten deal before it could be put over on them. And there are people like Louis Bromfield, who, in his ruggedly individualistic argument against the AAA in the Special AAA Supplement to this magazine, declares that he "resents" being forced into AAA "to help writers who should either have the intelligence or take the trouble to protect their own rights or have the good sense to employ an agent who will do so." But it's pretty clear, we submit, that "intelligence" and "good sense" make a weak hand when the other party holds all the trumps. Writers who can be considered seasoned veterans have not come out much better than Brant and Heifetz.



James M. Cain reports that in 1933 he sold a story called *The Baby in the Icebox* to Edgar Selwyn for \$1,000. Two weeks later Selwyn resold the story to Paramount for \$3,500. When the picture was released, *The Baby in the Icebox* had apparently grown up and become a young lady with more comfortable notions, to wit: *She Made Her Bed*. SWG member Cain comments that he still has the highest esteem for the late Mr. Selwyn, but it is also likely that such an experience may account, in some small part, for the whole-heartedness with which Jim Cain is laboring for the protection of all writers through an American Authors' Authority.

A word about the figures mentioned in this report: "Alleged,"

"reported," "said to be," must, of necessity, be used again and again in a piece like this. Talking prices with people involved in twice-sold tales has been a rather delicate matter. Quite understandably, some individuals have refused to discuss their roles in such transactions. The only way to be completely accurate regarding money figures is to check the books of all persons concerned. Since this is not feasible, there is the possibility of error. Therefore, in those cases where figures conflict, with a seller giving one price and the buyer another, the figure finally used has favored the non-writer party. Lest writers who read this might feel an impulse to protest such generosity, let them be assured that we can afford to lean backward.

A twice-sold tale with a stinger as a sequel is the case of *Remember the Day*, a book by Mrs. Kenneth Horan. It is alleged that Clarence Brown and Jules Goldstone bought this property, including all rights to the characters therein, for an amount in the neighborhood of \$1,250. They resold the book to RKO for \$30,000.

Mrs. Horan wrote another book called *Papa Went to Congress*. MGM made an offer of \$50,000 for the property. At this point RKO politely reminded MGM that RKO had purchased Mrs. Horan's previous book, *Remember the Day*, and in their contract with Brown and Goldstone was a clause which made the characters of *Remember the Day* the exclusive property of RKO. And since the following book, *Papa Went to Congress*, dealt with the same characters, MGM would, of course, be infringing on RKO's property rights if they bought the new book and made a picture of it.

Papa Went to Congress has never been sold. Mrs. Horan received \$1,250 for two properties which were worth a total of \$80,000 to two studios.

Incidentally, Clarence Brown is said to have bought the novel, *Our Vines Have Tender Grapes*, by George Victor Martin, for about \$2,500 and resold it to MGM for about \$25,000.



Writers, confronted with these rather bewildering figures, might well ask, "How can we know how much a story is worth to a studio?"

Here is a simple guide that every writer with a story to sell can cut out and paste in his hat for handy reference when negotiating a story sale:

According to figures supplied by the producers themselves through the Johnston Office, the average budget of a production provides five per cent for story costs. Story preparation, a separate division, is allotted seven per cent of the total production budget.

Thus the total percentage for finished screenplay is twelve per cent. If you are told that the producer figures on spending a million dollars to bring your story to the screen, then on the basis of five per cent for story cost, the price of your story should be \$50,000. When writers get less than the budgetary amount, that can only mean that they are paving the way for a reduction in the average percentage allotted to story cost. And since that would be unfair to the rest of your fellow writers, not to mention yourself, you can consider it your bounden duty to insist on the proper price for your story.

Let it be added, quickly, that this information should in no way limit writers' prices. The budgetary allowance of five per cent can properly be regarded as simply a floor on story prices, and many properties certainly encourage producers to stretch the percentage appreciably. When Metro pays a published price of \$650,000 for *Annie Get Your Gun*, it's pretty safe to conclude that they're not going to spend \$13,000,000 on the film production.



An aspect of twice-sold tales that shouldn't be overlooked is the financial hurt these transactions cause the Screen Writers' Guild. When a writer sells a story, a percentage of the money is paid to the Guild as assessments. When a producer, agent, or just plain speculator resells the story, the Guild is deprived of further revenue. And the tax situation figures, too. When a writer sells a story, it's income; when a non-writer resells the same story, it's capital gain, which is subject to a much lower nick from Uncle Sam.

There is one story property that has become legendary because of its fantastic history. Maurice J. Speiser, the New York literary attorney, when asked about resale cases that had come to his attention, wrote:

"I do know of such an occurrence on the part of the late Eric Knight's Flying Yorkshireman which was sold through his agent for a nominal consideration and passed through four or five hands before it reached the price at which it should originally have been sold."

Indeed, the fancied flights of Sam, the Flying Yorkshireman, are only equalled by the actual flights of the story itself through Hollywood, in and out of producers' and agents' offices and each time bearing with it added value.

Eric Knight's whimsical story doesn't quite come under the classification of a twice-sold tale. Its devious history entitles it to be classed, rather, as a six-sold tale. Step by step, as accurately as possible, here is the history of The Flying Yorkshireman:

1. Eric Knight's agent, Berg-Allenberg, sold the story to Earl Carroll for \$1,000 plus a guarantee of four or six weeks of employment for Knight at \$400 per week. At that time Carroll was a producer at Twentieth Century-Fox. He couldn't interest Darryl F. Zanuck in the story for studio purchase, so his plan was to produce the story on his own with W. C. Fields playing Sam.

2. The plan to star Fields in the story fell through. After holding the script for a year, Carroll sold it back to Berg-Allenberg for \$2,000. The agency told him they wanted the story for a package deal to star their clients, Charlie Ruggles and ZaSu Pitts. For one reason or another, though, the package deal wasn't consummated.

3. Meanwhile, Sidney Skolsky had read The Flying Yorkshireman in Story Magazine and become excited over its possibilities for the screen. He found the story was owned by Berg-Allenberg. In partnership with Jack Moss, Skolsky bought the story from Berg-Allenberg for \$7,500.

4. Skolsky went to work to try to bring the story to the screen. Finally, despite his faith in the story, he was forced to quit. He and Moss resold the story to Eddie Cantor for \$15,000.

5. After Cantor failed to get a satisfactory screenplay out of the story, he resold it to Frank Lloyd for \$20,000.

6. While Frank Lloyd held the story, Eric Knight obtained a sum of money in satisfaction of the four or six week work guarantee originally agreed upon by Earl Carroll. Lloyd couldn't get a satisfactory screen

treatment of the story, either. He sold the property to Frank Capra for \$40,000. As matters now stand, *The Flying Yorkshireman* is still grounded on Capra's story shelf.

It's interesting to note that Frank Lloyd still considers *The Flying Yorkshireman* a wonderful story. And Sidney Skolsky also has faith in the story, so much so, in fact, that he stands ready to repurchase it from Capra!



These twice-sold tales we've told are only a sampling, but still a large enough sampling to counter any defense that resales are rare instances which should not be taken seriously by writers.

One defense of resales is that it is the writer himself who makes such deals possible. We can only reply that, while it is true that writers are often forced by economic circumstances to sell a script in a hurry, the main responsibility lies with the person who frequently buys a story only after he has a resale virtually lined up.

This is a writers' problem too immediate to be set aside for solution by AAA. What is required is insertion of a clause in all story sale contracts which provides that in case of resale of the property, all additional monies, or an agreed percentage thereof, exclusive of recognized, necessary fees, commissions and expenses, shall revert to the author or authors.

All reputable agents and producers will surely wish to take advantage of this chance to show their fairness by agreeing to this clause. Frank Capra and Frank Lloyd, both of whom figured in the tag end of *The Flying Yorkshireman* deal, have put themselves on record as endorsing this principle that the original creator of the story shall share in resale monies. Certainly their commendable examples can be emulated by the rest of the industry, especially the major studios.

For, regarding the major studios, one thing is clear: By and large, they do not make a practice of buying stories for the sake of reselling them for a profit. They're in business to produce pictures, and when a story is resold to another studio, it's usually for a valid reason: either the story couldn't be satisfactorily cast or it couldn't be licked. (Mention of

"unlicked" stories reminds us of the story of the producer who valiantly exclaimed: "Give me one good writer and I'll lick this script all by myself!"

An example of a major studio reselling a script is the resale of *Duel in the Sun* by RKO to David O. Selznick. Niven Busch sold his story to the studio for \$30,000. After accumulating story development costs, and then discovering that casting was unsatisfactory, the studio resold the script to Selznick at a profit of approximately \$40,000. Neither SWG member Busch nor RKO foresaw a resale of the story, and a clause covering resale would have taken care of the situation.

To those persons who have offered the defense that speculation in story properties has helped sell scripts that would not otherwise have been purchased, we can only ask them to read some of our twice-sold tales again. There we see that studios were quite willing to buy the stories, that the stories had substantial value before the speculators stepped in and bought them. The very fact that the speculators have been able to resell the stories they bought is proof that the stories had a market all along. By permitting the writer to share in the gain on resale, the industry can escape unpleasant accusations, and the motive of disloyalty to one's clients can be removed.

We all know the bromide: "Plays are not written, but rewritten." Let's put an end to a new, and costly, bromide which is arising: "Screen stories are not sold, but resold."

Then we will have a healthier atmosphere for the creation and sale of material for the screen.

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WHAT IS SCREENWRITING?

SHERIDAN GIBNEY

ALMOST daily screenwriters are heard to complain of the lack of understanding among critics and public regarding their function in the motion picture industry. For want of an adequate definition of screenwriting the layman is quite naturally at a loss to evaluate the screen writer's profession; and since, after fifty years of motion pictures, the words "screenwriter" and "screenwriting" do not appear in current dictionaries, it would seem fitting that someone attempt a definition. Indeed, being a screenwriter myself, I find it more and more disconcerting to be engaged in an activity which to the average person is utterly incomprehensible.

Why does this confusion exist? There are many reasons. In the studios, for instance, one commonly hears a producer say that he is "preparing" two or three scripts for production. By this he means that he has two or three or more writers working on several stories which, in his discretion, may or may not be produced. Thus the word "preparing" means that he has employed writers to prepare screenplays under his supervision. We might say he is like an epicure who has, with the aid of his chef, "prepared" a certain dish for his guests and hopes that the guests will like it. But if the dish fails to please him, he is under no compulsion to have it served. The dish he has "prepared" has somehow been spoiled by his cook. Screenwriting, in this sense, might be defined as the effort of a producer to get from writers scripts that appeal to his taste; and like the epicure, who is at liberty to hire and fire as many

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cooks as he pleases, the producer in his laudable zeal to "prepare" a good script can try one writer after another until the desired result is obtained.

But to the public at large, including critics, college professors and bobby-soxers, screenwriting has quite a different meaning. The producer's "gourmetic" function is almost unknown. The general belief is that pictures are concocted by a mysterious alchemy of the director's inventiveness and the actor's wit. This is especially true of critics, since laymen give less thought to the matter. Many actors are famous for their repartee, felicity of phrase, or attitude toward the opposite sex; while directors' touches are tirelessly pointed out in critical reviews.



Perhaps the most succinct definition of screenwriting appears in the trade paper "Variety," which refers to the writers' profession as "scribbling." The word "scribbling," of course, is used in an intimate trade sense implying a certain modest, self-effacing attitude on the part of the writer, which the trade paper affectionately indulges. If the papers were equally fond of directors and producers they might find similar terms for these occupations. Directing might be known endearingly as "fiddling" and producing might coyly be captioned "piddling." It is only when you read the contract that the producers have signed with the Screen Writers' Guild that you find the writers' services referred to as "special, unique, unusual, extraordinary and of an intellectual character, giving them a peculiar value, the loss of which cannot be reasonably or adequately compensated in damages in an action at law."

It would be interesting to know what the producing companies mean by this very flattering definition of a writer's services; but the purpose of this article is to inquire into the meaning of the word "screenwriting," which is in no way defined by the foregoing clause in the Guild contract.

Equally baffling is the statement frequently heard that writers make an important "contribution" to motion pictures; unless it would be correct to say that composers and playwrights make "important contributions" to the opera and the theatre. But I have never heard the

phrase used in this connection. I have never heard anyone remark, for instance, that Puccini made an "important contribution" to *La Boheme*, or that Marc Connelly made an "important contribution" to *The Green Pastures*. While it is true in both cases that the stories were not original with these men, it is equally true that the important contribution that Puccini made to the opera *La Boheme* was the opera itself; and in the case of *The Green Pastures* Marc Connelly's contribution was the play. And quite rightly therefore, since the works were created by these gentlemen for their respective media, they are commonly referred to as Puccini's *La Boheme* and Marc Connelly's *The Green Pastures*. Thus there has never been any confusion as to what a composer or playwright "contributes," or indeed what composing or playwriting is. It is reserved only for the screenwriter to be plagued by this almost universal vagueness and uncertainty as to the nature of his work.



The answer, of course, is obvious. As in the case of the composer with his opera and the playwright with his play, the screenwriter contributes the motion picture. Whether filmed or not it is his creation. Regardless of property rights, copyrights and contracts, it remains the product of his creative mind and special talent. Artistically it belongs to him. The fact that he, like the chef, is in most instances an employee is irrelevant. Equally irrelevant to this discussion is what becomes of his creation. All we are concerned about here is what the writer does; and most assuredly what he does is to write a motion picture. Because he has certain abilities that are "special, unique, unusual, extraordinary and of an intellectual character" he is able to create something that is peculiarly his — since it did not exist before — and without which producers cannot produce, actors cannot act and directors cannot direct. It is hardly honest, therefore, to speak of the writer's "contribution" to a motion picture. He creates the motion picture, whether the story is original or not. The picture having thus been created, the producer is at liberty to have it photographed if he chooses with the aid of actors, directors, cameramen and scores of technicians.

I labor this point only because so much laborious effort has been

expended to make it seem otherwise. For instance, many writers are called screenwriters who do not function as screenwriters at all. They are employed to do all sorts of things that have nothing to do with screenwriting. A man is not a screenwriter who merely polishes dialogue or thinks up gags or invents new business or conceives a new character, or adds "heart" to the heart interest or an overall glaze of sophistication. Nor is a man a screenwriter because he conceives an "idea," an "angle," a "great situation," a "wonderful opening" or an effective "dissolve." Professionally he **is** what he **does**: a dialogue polisher, a gag-man, etc., whose function, like the play doctor in the theatre, is to save the baby, not give birth to it. His services are of considerable value; but never in the history of the theatre has a man who has acted solely in this capacity been called a playwright. Why then should he be called a screenwriter?

Screenwriting is a new form of dramatic art. It is not something that any writer can master. It is based on the very specialized gift of dramatic talent. Many writers in other fields lack this gift and are only too willing to entrust their works to playwrights and screenwriters when they wish to see them enacted on the stage or screen. Very few novelists are capable of dramatizing their own novels; very few playwrights can transform their plays successfully into screenplays. It is this elementary fact — so well understood by novelists and playwrights — that seems so difficult of comprehension in the motion picture industry.



Another source of confusion is the common complaint of critics that so many writers work on a script that screenwriting cannot be evaluated. This is true in certain instances, but the results are rarely happy. The reviewer might better concern himself with those screenwriters who, either alone or with a collaborator, have created motion pictures of such extraordinary power and beauty and emotional content as to rank among the foremost artistic achievements of modern times. These are the screenwriters who should be singled out, evaluated, and seriously discussed, as someday they will be. These are the writers who define "Screenwriting." Like playwrights and composers they conceive a story in terms of their medium and create screenplays as complete and

accurate in detail as the score of an opera or the text of a drama. When their published scripts are finally made available to the public, then perhaps the true nature of their work will be understood and a proper recognition accorded them.



THE HOLLYWOOD FILM SOCIETY

The Hollywood Film Society, with the cooperation of the Hollywood Writers Mobilization, has been organized to provide a regular opportunity to see the great films of the past and those films which, in retrospect, have played an important part in the development of the motion picture.

With the assistance of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and other film libraries, it will present regular programs of feature, documentary and experimental films. For this purpose it has acquired the Coronet Theatre, 366 N. La Cienega, Los Angeles 46. First film showing is scheduled for May. The Hollywood Film Society, a non-profit membership group, is open to all. Its brochure and film program may be obtained by writing to the above Coronet Theatre address.

Among the original sponsors are Iris Barry, Geraldine Fitzgerald, John Houseman, Howard Koch, Irving Lerner, Val Lewton, Charles Laughton, Kenneth Macgowan, Adrian Scott, Igor Stravinsky and Orson Welles. The Hollywood Writers Mobilization is working to interest writers in the Film Society program.



EMPLOYMENT OF WRITERS

The Executive Board has appointed a sub-committee of the Economic Program Committee, of which Lester Cole is Chairman, to investigate the current economic situation of the motion picture industry as it affects writers. Stanley Roberts is Chairman of the sub-committee which will be composed of Melville Baker, Ring Lardner, Jr., Henry Myers, Maurice Rapf, and Leo Townsend.

While the employment of writers by the major producers is sharply below what it was in April of 1946 and 1945, it approximates employment in 1940. Employment of writers by independent production companies has shown an increase of approximately 16% as compared to a year ago.

Following is a table showing current employment situation:

STUDIOS:	March 1947	March 1946	March 1945	March 1944
Columbia	34	44	49	27
MGM	83	132	105	100
Paramount	48	50	35	33
Republic	23	34	38	29
RKO	34	34	51	37
20th Century-Fox	48	60	31	55
Universal	29	37	38	34
Warner Bros.	32	43	39	46
TOTALS (employed at major studios)	331	434	386	361

Total number of writers employed at independent studios:
 January 1 to March 1, 1947 168
 January 1 to March 31, 1946 145

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STOP ME IF YOU WROTE THIS BEFORE

ROLAND KIBBEE

A YEAR ago last Christmas an article under my byline entitled Two Men on a Vehicle appeared in *The Screen Writer*. The piece caused quite a flurry of excitement in critical circles, if not in public squares, and — I am reliably informed — would have been reprinted in the *Reader's Digest* save for their editor's reluctance to delete a single word. As you know, nothing is reprinted in toto in the *Readers Digest* except the testimonials on the back cover and the new subscription solicitation.

My article, to recall it for the benefit of that small but noisy minority who never read it, set forth a cogent methodology for besting one's collaborator by arrogating to one's self the credit for the collaborator's good writing, and saddling said collaborator with the onus of one's own bad writing. In the year and a half that has elapsed since its publication I have done some thinking and reached some conclusions, among the latter being that it is frivolous for an author to retain film rights to material published in *The Screen Writer*. For the most part my meditation has been provoked by the flood of correspondence that has poured into the post-office box in which I and my family have dwelt since my discharge from the armed forces. These clamorous letters point out that while my collaborationist strategy is sound, I have offered no solution for the writer who has been unable to snare a collaborator. Like most of the other luxuries these days there appears to be a serious shortage of collaborators.

Many writers find themselves on their own, a fate which, to many writers, is worse than re-writing. These literary refugees are left to shift

ROLAND KIBBEE is a member of the SWG. His earlier experience includes authorship of lines for many celebrated radio comedians.

for themselves in the perilous Hollywoods without the guidance, comfort or abnegation of an obliging collaborator. I myself have been without one ever since I wrote the article.

In consequence of all this it strikes me that the time is ripe to provide foundling authors with a source of supply for the scenes, characters and dialogues demanded by a screenplay. There have been published, to be sure, a number of volumes purporting to give the writer-reader a working knowledge of screenwriting, but these always assume that the reader can write — as capricious as the assumption that every writer can read.

What I have in mind is no mere guide-book or instructive manual, but an itemized catalogue of scene contents, characterization keys and word-for-word lines that seem essential to every motion picture ever made. If such a volume sounds bulky in prospect it is only because you fail to appreciate how really few scenes, characters and lines are in current usage on the screen.

Our compendium need not concern itself with plots, for as everybody knows there are only one or two, which as everybody knows, are known to everybody. No, the broadest general category will unquestionably be the love scene. There is a love scene in every film, and you are reasonably safe in assuming that said love scene will contain a boy and a girl, unless Hollywood goes farther with *The Fall of Valor* than is generally expected. You, as the writer, will be expected to provide the love scene participants with an exchange of dialogue and business. In this bracket there are two such exchanges open to you, whereas in the other categories you will find only one. In Love Scene Exchange No. 1, the Girl looks fondly at the Boy, and says: "You're crazy." To this, the Boy will reply, with ardor: "Yes, crazy about **you!**" Love Scene Exchange No. 2 is usually employed when it is desired to keep the scene moving with pantomime. In No. 2 the Girl looks off-scene at whatever is handy and murmurs: "Beautiful, isn't it?" Whereupon the Boy, now get this — the boy, without taking his eyes off her radiant face, replies: "Yes, very."

If there are any other love scenes than the two offered above, I haven't seen them.

Naturally, this love story will progress. It may take many different

directions before the picture is over, sometimes as many as three. You may take it for granted that you will be required to separate the lovers. This is accomplished by introducing a stern-visaged old gent who calls on the girl in her apartment.

"Miss Adair?" he inquires.

"Yes."

"I'm his father," he announces, snapping open a check-book and producing a fountain pen. "How much?"

She will then show him out, or destroy the check after he is gone, but in no case has one ever been deposited.

Motion picture heroines are notoriously vengeful toward sons with bigoted fathers, and she will return the boy's ring instanter. And since you do not wish to write the hero off entirely, you will not have him slink away with the solitaire like a chastised child. He will, instead, snarl: "Aw, wear it on another finger." Let me caution you that this line cannot be transplanted if the object is a fraternity pin worn on the girl's sweater. In that case you better just have the boy take it and get the hell out.

Of course, the boy may be the one who is leaving the girl. Since studios are diffident when it comes to attributing villainy to the leading actress, there is usually very little reason for the boy leaving the girl. This hole is filled up with a redundancy that is always used in the terminal line, to wit, "We're through, washed up, finished, kaput." Any one of these finalities would appear to be inadequate, but in combination they have ended more love affairs than gambling and drink. If it is desired to establish that she still wants him, it can be done without any dialogue at all by having her wait until he has gone, count ten under the breath, and then rush to the door and throw it open — too late.

And in the third case the two lovers may be parting without rancor. In this event the partee says to the parter, "Don't look back. I want to remember you like this." This separation, by the way, when it isn't caused by the Army or the Police Department, is invariably provoked by Mme. Ouspenskaya or Michael Chekhov who has said: "You must give her up. She is not your mistress. Music is your mistress."

There is still another separation scene. It is known as the Momentary Split, and is found in the slicker Frank Capra type of film just before

the end. The boy is an oafish fellow who suddenly draws himself up to his full height at the swank party and says: "Okay, you've had your laugh. I guess I'm just a big sucker from Springfield. Well, maybe that's where I belong — " and so saying, he takes his cap and carpet-bag and shuffles out. Now the girl rises with tear-glistened eyes, throws off the grasp of the slimy New York sophisticate who would restrain her, and goes after the boy. "I think I'm going to like Springfield," is her astonishing prognostication as we fade out.

Medical pictures, too, should be provided for in the catalogue. Research alone is never enough to provide the film writer with authentic cinematic medical procedure. Many an obstetrician, for example, has —



upon learning that I was a screen writer — seized me fiercely by the lapels of my canary - yellow buckskin smoking jacket and asked me what the hell (and I quote) the film doctor intends to do with the "pan of boiling water" he always requests with such urgency in childbirth scenes.

If the doctor in your story is merely a supporting character, and doesn't have the heroine at his side to help

him with the case, it will become necessary for you to have him look down at the patient solemnly and declaim: "There's only one doctor who can save her — and he's in Vienna." It has always seemed to me to be a sheer joy to fall critically ill in Vienna where there always seems to be the only doctor who can save one. An old favorite, the name of the city fell into disuse during the late War when it was discovered that audience's sympathies frequently departed from the patient and went out to the doctor in Vienna.

Pictures employ a variety of backgrounds and atmospheres, and frequently run in cycles — at one period the psychological drama being

predominant, and at another, say, the historical piece. The Western and the Who-Done-It, of course, are always with us, and the limitations of space prevent my including their well-established ingredients here. As a matter of fact, they will probably require whole auxiliary catalogues separate from the volume comprising the main body of screenwriting material. I should like, however, an opportunity to provide the reader here and now with data for some of the other classifications.

If you are writing in an aviation background, you will eventually find yourself confronted with a scene in which there is absolutely no recourse for the hero save to rush up to whoever is in charge and stammer defiantly: "Sir, you can't send that kid up in stuff like this!" The aforementioned kid, by the way, must be characterized earlier in the film as a lovable little egomaniac. This is achieved by having him retort, when urged to curb his reckless flying, "Aw, I can fly the crates they came in!"

In biographical stories you will want to include the scene in which the wife of the young scientist, artist or tycoon appears at the laboratory, study or office door, candle in hand, to plead with the sweating tyro that "it's nearly morning, darling, you must get some sleep." It will also be necessary, at some point, to bring this same budding genius under the scrutiny of two local cynics whose dialogue runs as follows:

1st Cynic

He'll never amount to a thing
puttering around with them
light bulbs.

2nd Cynic

What's his name?

1st Cynic

Tom Edison.

Anybody writing a film musical will want to be able to have at his finger tips the scene in which the heroine is performing in the Big Time for the first time. It is not necessary that the actress be particularly talented. Your camera, for the most part, will be focused on two avuncular gentlemen in the wings who are watching her, and who will shortly turn surprised grins on each other, light one another's cigars, smile encouragingly at the performer, and then, turning toward the hero who

awaits the verdict confidently, hold up their hands with the tips of the index finger and thumb placed together and the three remaining fingers fanned out. This is the screen's marvellously brisk manner of telling the audience that the girl is made. Going to be a star, that is.



In addition to specialized film milieus, our Thesaurus of Screenwriting must provide the author with a general listing of devices serviceable as solutions in all story problems.

For example, when confronted in a screen story with a hero who appears to have no good reason for being alive, and the audience's acceptance of this wastrel as a protagonist is in doubt, always be sure to have the rich, crotchety maiden aunt rap the head of her cane on the arm of her wheel chair and announce emphatically: "I like the boy's spirit." This is known as motivation. Characterization is something else again. That is when the same maiden aunt responds to a greeting of "good morning" with "What's good about it?"

The building up of basically dull events in order to justify the fanciful operations which your characters are driven to by them is accomplished by having a newspaperman telephone the city desk and

yell: "Hold the presses — this is the story of the year! Old man Claybourne's daughter has run away again!" Telephones are very useful that way. For example, the indication of cataclysmic developments in a character's situation between two dissolves is dramatized by placing the character at a phone and having him or her say: "Hello — Mr. Waterhouse? Is that job

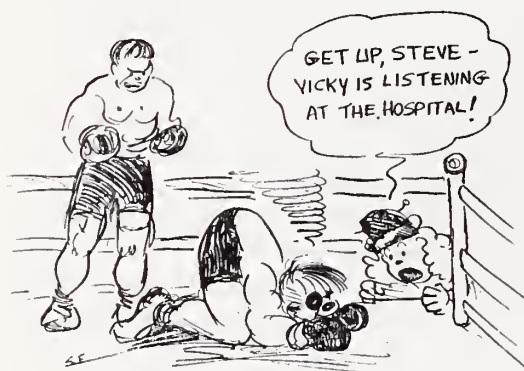


you spoke about yesterday still open?"

If the objective is to qualify a sadistic killer like, say, Sidney

Greenstreet, it can be done by imputing to him gentle motives for his savage brutality. "It's really a pity," he tells the girl strapped to the operating table. "I don't want to kill you, you know. As a matter of fact, I've grown rather fond of you. If only you hadn't been curious." Or he may nullify death's sting by explaining that he has spent his life collecting the first ten poems of Edgar Guest. "I have found nine," he tells his victim as he prepares to dismember her. "You have the tenth."

At other times you will discover that there is no earthly reason for your hero to continue fighting the forces arrayed against him. He can be persuaded to continue the foolhardy struggle only by his girl who will



pick his head off a cocktail table by the hair and sneer: "You're not going to quit, are you? You didn't get the good conduct medal at Astoria for being a quitter." This same girl always occupies the best ringside seat at a prize fight enabling her to address the fallen gladiator with: "Get up, Steve, you've got to get up. Vicky is listening at the hospital." He invariably gets up, too, long

before the referee can count to 34.

Or in the case of — but, wait. It ought to be clear by now that a catalogue is necessary. This is merely an article, and I have offered a scant handful of lines and situations and scenes, whereas the motion picture industry employs literally dozens. Wouldn't it be nice to isolate them at will at one's desk without having to journey to the neighborhood theater to refresh (and I use the word advisedly) one's memory?

(Illustrations for this article were contributed by SWG member Samuel Fuller)

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FILM AUTHOR! FILM AUTHOR!

JOSEPH L. MANKIEWICZ

SUCH masterful films as *La Maternelle* and *Ballerina*, among others, are evidence enough of Jean Benoit-Lévy's talent as a creator of motion pictures. His recent appointment as Director of Films and Visual Information for the United Nations' Department of Public Information is a further tribute to his eminence. Unhappily, however, his new book, *The Art of the Motion Picture*, viewed as either an instructive or critical dissertation on film making, is worthy neither of his talent nor his great repute.

To begin with, by the very pretentiousness of his title, M. Benoit-Lévy promises at the same time both a panoramic and profound study of what is still a very moot question. And granted that there is an Art of motion pictures, certainly even the most concise observer could not hope to dispose of the subject satisfactorily in some 250 pages, half of which are devoted to the application of the film as an implement of education.

In many ways, this first part of the book is by far the most rewarding. The utilization and production of the film as a medium of pedagogy, sociological study and welfare, industrial advertising and technique, for the furtherance of international trust and understanding — all of these are of supreme interest to M. Benoit-Lévy, and he writes of them with authority and clarity. In a lucid, almost primer style, he traces the development and progress of the cinema in education, and indicates his high hopes for its glowing future.

It is in his treatment of what we might call the non-glowing present of the non-documentary motion picture, that the author dis-

SWG member JOSEPH L. MANKIEWICZ is the well-known writer, director and producer. He has contributed in various ways to the creation of many of Hollywood's most outstanding feature films.

appointed this reader most deeply. I found his standards fuzzy, some of his theories indeed bizarre — such as those he propounds on acting — and his general viewpoint a surprisingly narrow, almost insular one. Permeating his entire effort, for example, is that insistent and — to me — irritating overtone which I have encountered many times before in the critical writings and opinions of his countrymen; namely, an unspoken yet unmistakable implication that all contemporary manifestations of Art and Culture have somehow, unexplainedly, been translated from the French. Let me point out at once that I do not regard this assumption to be a conscious one, or peculiar only to M. Benoit-Lévy; on the contrary, he makes a point of pausing every now and then to indicate the worthiness of some non-French, even American effort. He speaks most highly of Sam Wood's (sic!) *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, for instance.

To be sure, his stand is enthusiastically endorsed by Dr. Alvin Johnson, who writes in his preface with quiet authority: "The French have been the great pioneers of the motion picture. They have made most important contributions to the technique and more than any other people have known how to develop the art of the cinema." There should be some dogged opposition to this thesis, I think, from students of the cinema who will question, among other vagaries, M. Benoit-Lévy's complete dismissal of all German contribution to film technique and art. The names of Murnau, Wegener, Pabst and Dupont never appear; the early Lang and Lubitsch films, pictures such as *Caligari*, *Variety* and *The Last Laugh* — which marked the beginnings and ends of whole schools of technique — go unmentioned. The Russians are a polite afterthought, as if the cinema had come to them with Lend-Lease. The Swedes — Stiller, for example — and the English are ignored.

Another source of dismay, in passing, is the praise the author sees fit to bestow upon certain aspects of Hollywood picture making which we, on the other hand, have long regarded as particular weaknesses of our system. For example, the casting of small parts. A constant source of frustration and envy to American film-makers has always been the colorful and expert actors with whom the "bits" in European pictures have been cast. M. Benoit-Lévy pauses particularly to observe that: "Hollywood has become a magnet attracting all the world's great talent

... to fill the biggest parts as well as the smallest, film authors have only to take their pick of the dazzling array of talent lying before them."

It would require another book, rather than a brief commentary such as this, to examine M. Benoit-Lévy's work in detail, to refute or support his various theories of film making. However there does remain one point, and to my mind the most important of all, which I have saved for last — along with too little space in which to discuss it properly, in the light of its pertinence to the American screen writer and his craft.



It will be noted that in the quotation above, M. Benoit-Lévy refers to the "film author." He uses the phrase frequently throughout his book, and he makes its meaning most clear. He describes the function of the "film author" in great detail; further, he goes to the length of supplying an ingenious chart which establishes the relation of the "film author" to the other components of the film-making organization. And let it be understood right now that by "film author," M. Benoit-Lévy does **not** mean the writer of the screen play.

An examination of the aforementioned chart would indicate that an approximate Hollywood equivalent of the "film author" would be our writer-director. That is, the "film author" works in immediate contact with a producer and his business organization; the original work from which he develops his script; his creative and technical associates such as composer, cameraman, cutter, assistant director, et al. However — and here is the very essence of the creator's role in film making — the contribution of the "film author" is an uninterrupted process which begins with the development of the screen play, and ends with the final cutting of the film.

Writing and directing moving pictures, then, are — and should be — the two components of an hyphenated entity. Put it as you will — that the direction of a screen play is the second half of the writer's work, or that the writing of a screen play is the first half of the director's work. The fact remains that a properly written screen play **has already been directed** — in his script, by the trained screen writer who has conceived

his film in visual symbols and translated them into descriptive movement and the spoken word. Thus the size of the image, the camera angle, the length of the cut, the tempo of movement and speech, the stage of characterization, the reading of the line, the need and nature of musical background — in short, **the film** must be before the screen writer's eyes and in his mind as he writes. It seems to me to follow in natural creative sequence, then, for that same mind to direct the process by which these symbols and their translated equivalents are put upon the screen.



Up to this point I am quite sure there can be very few screen writers who are not in full and happy accord with my reasoning. Excepting those who do not want to direct — for reasons of temperament or simple disinterest — the vast majority who **do** want to, will now rise to a point of information. "That's all very true, very sound," they say, "But how do you get a crack at it?" The answer is equally true and equally sound — but not what they want to hear. The answer, in view of M. Benoit-Lévy's requisites for a "film author," would seem to be — learn your trade.

It would be edifying to have a public reading — before a full Guild membership — of the complete list of original screen plays submitted by the American screen writer for Academy Award consideration. It is probable that even those members most loudly contemptuous of the suggestion that they write original material for the screen would find some occasion for reflection and possibly embarrassment at the appalling lack of either originality or quality in the product of the Hollywood writer for 1946.

With the exception of four or five commercially sound screenplays — one or two obviously custom built to suit the talents of available personalities — the others consisted of variations on two themes; either "headin' 'em off at the pass" or "if ya want me, copper, come an' get me." Shades of *Citizen Kane*, *The Great McGinty* and the too few other memorable examples of what first rate American screen writing can be! It is high time that the Hollywood screen writer admitted his major part in the dogged maintenance of the comfortable but false assumption that

we are adults making pictures for adolescent mentalities. The reverse is much nearer the truth.

Our colleagues abroad are well aware of that truth. Again, one has only to consult the Academy list. Those titles which, in meeting the eye, recall a provocative and originally conceived moving picture, will be found invariably to be English, French or Italian. The English, in particular, are providing their screen with a supply of exciting and well written material. More than anything else, in my opinion, the superiority of English screen writing will be the reason why in a very few years the American film will be ruefully nibbling at the hind udder as far as world prestige — **and** the world market — is concerned.

True, the irrational and sub-moronic censorship under which we work is an important obstacle to originality in screen writing. There, for instance, would be a relevant target for militant activity by the Guild. But the writers of foreign pictures intended for distribution in America are restricted exactly as we are. And all important European film product falls into that category. In addition, they must abide by the idiocies of their own native blue-noses. The point is, the film writers abroad **think** originally and their thinking is based upon a respect for their medium; and their writing is based upon a study of that medium and a knowledge of it. The foreign screenplay, you will find, almost without exception could not have been made into anything but a moving picture. One last word about the censorship bugaboo. At a recent studio meeting, a writer arose to inquire pointedly of Mr. Joe Breen, "Why wouldn't we be permitted to write a screen play like *The Baker's Wife*?" The answer from Mr. Breen was an unnerving one. "You would be," he said, "All you've got to do is to write it."

And now let's not go into the old one about "What's the use of writing anything good, the producers don't want anything original or untried, they're all buttonhole-makers, etc." It's time we stopped helping to lay that smoke screen, too. It has never been, nor is it now, my intention to defend or disguise the Willow-Run policies and Woolworth standards of many producers. Yet even they will lift their heads from the sands and see the light — once their rear ends become sufficiently burned. In the meantime, it must be admitted that there are in Hollywood right now many producers of courage, taste and perception

— many more, again, than it is comfortable to admit. They will buy good original screen material, they are desperate for good original screen material. We must not judge them too harshly if they stupidly fail to recognize it in the story of the madcap young heiress and the brash reporter, or the sinister machinations of two-headed no-handed Dr. X, or even the one about the couple who aren't really married but pretend to be for reasons of the author.

There has never been a market to equal the present one for good original stories and screenplays. There is only one important hitch — one that has existed as long as creative people have earned their bread by their works. The purchaser, stubbornly enough, reserves the right to be the judge of what he buys. It would be cosy if the individual (I hope I may be pardoned the use of the word) writer could evaluate what he writes. But that isn't the way it works in this reactionary world. It never has been. But, somehow, a good writer sells. And when he sells enough, he becomes important enough to have something to say about what happens to his writings. And pretty soon he has a great deal to say about it.

These past few years have seen many Guild members become "film authors." They are making a notable percentage of the American film output now, and that percentage will increase because it is inevitable that the writer who has learned his trade must be given greater authority over his work. But, fortunately or unfortunately, this authority cannot be a mass or Guild authority — it belongs to the individual writer who has earned it as a craftsman. Rossen, Herbert, Huston, Brackett, Wilder, Binyon, Schary, Sturges, Krasna, Seaton, Trotti, Buchman, Daves, just to name some, the producers weren't pressured or resolutioned into "giving them a crack at it" — they were delighted, they want more of the same. Writers who have learned their trade. Film authors.

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Two Poems of Hollywood

JOHN MOTLEY

I

Weekend in Palm Springs

Catatonicly suspended in a glass-green square of pool
They wind their fear around a golden spool
Of desert-heat. The sun performs its dazzling trick
With dervish skill, exorcizing the sick
Familiar dreads. Even the awesome name
Of God-Executive need not be spoken. Here they came
Like pilgrims seeking imponderables in sand:
The probabilities of blitzing with an average hand;
The odds against their passions striding in the cage
Of apathetic, prostate-tired middle-age;
The mystic chances of a parlay in the third.
As for the facing and the reading of the written word,
There will be time enough. Not now. The Absolute recedes.
They count their hours as anchorites count beads.
This pool is foetal with escape. If dusk must fall,
Then sleep will be seduced by nembutal.

II

Portrait of an Individualist

"An artist of integrity, truly wedded to the brightly written page,
Must treasure isolation. Then will his Guild
Be a mere creative symbol. The words 'minimum wage'
Would have evoked a snicker from Flaubert, who tilled
The rich soil of his imagination, refusing to discuss
With literary hacks the economic worth of Pegasus."

"Such a man am I," he states, harpooning an imported anchovy.
"The talented are infinitely secure; only the failure tags himself
an 'employee'."

His phone rings. He leaves. I nibble cheese soaked in mild tokay,
Study the Braque above the mantelpiece. He returns, chooses
from the tray
A salted almond. "The Philistines have shelved my story.
I offered cinematic nectar to men who feed on offal. I glory
In their ignorance." He studies me, amused. "Do not commiserate.
Theirs is the loss. Four studios want me. But they'll wait
Until I write my play — a modern 'Les Bourgeois Gentilhommes'."

I nod and search for one last palatable crumb
Of conversation. But he is silent now. For suddenly he senses
I see the fright crouching behind his contact lenses.

MOTION PICTURES IN CENTRAL EUROPE

JUDITH PODSELMER

THE first reaction of the stranger arriving in Prague is one of wonder at the number of foreign pictures shown in theatres side by side; he can have his pick of American, Russian, British, French or Czech movies. Vienna having fallen to the depths of misery, Prague has now become the cultural hub of Central Europe, where products of the whole world fight for supremacy.

Czechoslovakia needs 180 to 200 films a year, and produces an average of twenty. The rest is provided by the big movie producing countries. Russia who had promised the Czechs during the war to deliver 50 films a year, got off to a flying start right after the liberation. The first pictures were enthusiastically received, since the Czechs had been seeing exclusively German pictures for 6 years.

However, after a while, the Czechs, like all other audiences, got tired of seeing only Resistance and war pictures. And since the Russians motion picture industry has decided to stop the movement toward entertainment pictures, and produce solely pictures aiming to raise the morale of the Russian people, there is little hope that Russian movies will regain their popularity with Czech audiences. The British and the French films which came later were enthusiastically received: after the Russian movies, their subjects and their psychological atmosphere were specially appreciated.

American pictures had long been expected. In September a contract was finally signed, allowing 80 American pictures to be distributed in Czechoslovakia. Though the critics were rather harsh, people stood in

JUDITH PODSELMER is a French journalist, critic and motion picture production assistant. Now living in Paris, she contributed to the November, 1946 issue of *THE SCREEN WRITER* an article on the International Film Festival at Cannes.

lines days in advance to book their seats. (There are no permanent showings in CSR). Their reactions to the first films being shown, *Wilson* and *The Human Comedy*, for instance, were somewhat unexpected. The Czech audience doesn't take sentimentality for granted, as does the American public, but is irked by it. In *Wilson* not only the historical discrepancies were thought ridiculous, but also the scenes showing the President's private life, and the Prague shop girls and their boy friends kept giggling all through the love scenes in *The Human Comedy*. *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* (with Robert Montgomery and Claude Rains, screenplay by Harry Segall,) was praised enthusiastically by all the screenwriters and directors. They raved about that combination of realism and supernatural in a humoristic vein in which the Americans succeed so well, and hoped to see more pictures like it.

The choice of foreign pictures to be shown in CSR is done by an admission committee of ten who can refuse them for cultural reasons. This committee is part of the Motion Picture Monopoly. The industry is not controlled by the state. There is a department of the Ministry of Information, headed by the poet Nezval, which participates in the direction of the Monopoly, but otherwise it is a whole and independent organization. It has 9 branches in charge of production, distribution, exports, finances, etc. . . . No screenplay can be passed without the approval of a special committee who judges on the basis of cultural value. Its aim is to raise the level of the public. The movies can be adventurous undertakings and still play safe. Czech movies which cost anything from 10 to 20 million crowns are not expected to garner more than 7 millions.

The money to back the productions comes from the picture houses. It is collected by the Monopoly since it is the sole distributor, and is turned to the production and the needs of the whole industry.

The Czech film production has seen its heyday twenty years ago. But one still recalls Gustav's Machaty's *Ecstasy*, which launched Hedy Lamarr on her career. There has been a number of good Czech directors. The two prominent ones are Vavra and Cap. Cap directed the interesting *Resistance* movie which was shown in Cannes and Vavra who is very impressed by the technique of Duvivier seems to specialize in historical films; he had one in Cannes and another one, *Rosina The*

Orphan, has been sold abroad. The trouble with Czech movies is the same one which affects all small countries: in a nation of 10 millions of inhabitants it is difficult to find a variety of actors similar to that of Hollywood. One has to resort to the same people for the same types of roles.

The big asset of Czechoslovakia is her studios. In Barandow, a suburb of Prague, she owns the largest and best-equipped stages of Europe. There, in the main building, are 7 air-conditioned stages, 3 of which can be used together, with the mills and the prop rooms built conveniently inside the building to reduce transportation to a minimum. The electrical installation displays the most recent improvements. And above all, Barandow is equipped for Agfacolor. The Germans shot some of their best color pictures there during the war. After the liberation, the Russians produced some pictures in Barandow. The Czechs also made their last historical picture in color. The results of Agfacolor are wonderful; the trouble is to find enough raw film. The only factory which produces it is in Wollfen, in the Russian zone of Germany, and it doesn't produce enough to satisfy any demand besides Russia's, for the time being.

However, the Czechs have big hopes for Barandow. There have been several projects of renting the studios to British or French productions. The French, whose studios are crumbling, would certainly profit by the combination. Several of their productions have already gone to Italy to shoot. But the Italians take all production costs to their charge, which the Czechs are not yet willing to do.

If the Czechs and the French do get to an agreement, and combine the technical perfections of Barandow with the imagination and skill of French technicians and artists, there are some hopes for great European pictures which could match the Hollywood products.



After the comfortably normal life of Prague, Vienna seems to have lagged two years behind and be still struggling in the throes of occupation. No coal, food and light at a minimum. However movie houses are even more crowded and cosmopolitan, each occupying force showing its most recent pictures to its soldiers. The Viennese hate war or resist-

ance pictures; which is to be expected since the Austrians, having become more or less nazified, never resisted the Germans. They want to be entertained to forget the life they are compelled to lead.

And there is a kind of competition between the occupying allies to show them their best pictures. There is an allied pool (of which the Russians are not members) for the distribution of pictures. The films made during the war, having been considered as German possessions, were nationalized and are also distributed through the pool. There is also a censorship which grants licenses to films to be produced.

In spite of the living conditions films are being produced in Austria. There are three studios: Rosenhügel in the Russian zone, Sievering in the American and Schoenbrunn in the English. Rosenhügel is the largest and most modern, but it lacks in equipment since the Russians took it away and were unable to replace it later. Several pictures have already been made in Vienna: *Der Weite Weg*, about the return of war prisoners, *Winter Melodien*, which was done in two versions: German and French. Prater Buben, with the little Viennese singers and Herman Thiernig, Helen Thiernig's brother. *The Triumph of Love*, which is the old Aristophanes comedy, *Lysistrata*, with modern dialogue and Viennese atmosphere in Greek settings.

This last one is an important production, directed by a well-known director, Alfred Stöger, with a participation of 100 actors. It required miracles of skill and will, since Vienna lacks all essentials: wood, plaster, material for dresses and even food for the actors, who sometimes fainted of hunger. When the electric current stopped, they had to work at night. However, every one worked hard to show that Austria can still produce good works. Also at a time when money has no value and taxes are high, movies are a good investment, and producers are easy to find.

The future of the Austrian motion picture industry depends on the future of Austria itself. The country has to get back on its feet before movies can be made in number. Also the spirit of the people has to change. In former days men like Willy Forst could produce some excellent pictures, because they transferred to the screen something which was the atmosphere of Vienna. Now Forst, who had been working for months and months on an Agfacolor picture at Barandow, Wiener Madeln, has stopped and waits for more favorable conditions to finish it.

Hartl, who used to be the director of Wien Film and made such pictures as "IFI ne repond plus" is also in retirement.

Vienna used to have scores of actors trained in the old school of theaters. But the spirit which used to fill those theaters doesn't exist anymore. In a country where every one is dissatisfied with the present conditions, but only knows how to grumble and nothing else, there is very little hope for creative works, unless some new genius, unknown up to now, discovers a new way of thought and expresses it on the screen.



REPORT ON AAA SUPPLEMENT

Demand for copies of THE SCREEN WRITER'S Special Supplement on the American Authors' Authority exhausted the first printing of 10,000, and made necessary a second edition of 5,000.

The AAA Supplement has been distributed among all members of the Authors' League of America organizations — the Authors' Guild, the Dramatists' Guild, the Radio Writers' Guild and the Screen Writers' Guild.

It has also been sent to thousands of unaffiliated professional writers throughout the United States and Europe.

In its revised and more complete form the AAA proposal as developed by SWG is winning extremely wide commendation and approval. It has apparently met effectively the arguments, misconceptions and misrepresentations provoked by the first proposal; the controversial storm stirred by the original AAA statement has lessened. The National Writers Club of Denver says: "This Supplement clarifies the meaning of AAA, and disabuses many minds of the idea that there is something nefarious and 'communistic' in the proposed American Authors' Authority."

Writers and writers' organizations are giving the plan analytical study. Writers' magazines have devoted much space to the revised proposal. The Writers' Journal, for instance, gave most of its front page in April to the AAA Supplement. In the meantime requests for copies of the Supplement continue to pour into the SWG office from all parts of the nation.



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E D I T O R I A L

NOW that April's gone, and the fiscal year, in terms of Annual Awards for Achievement in Motion Pictures, is ended, a screen writer may sit down to examine his balance sheet and to face once again the fact that his role in the creation of pictures is still regarded as a walk-on.

A scouring of the nation's press after the recent Academy Awards, for example, reveals no bannerlines proclaiming: "SHERWOOD OSCARED FOR 'BEST YEARS'!", no bold-face huzzahs advancing such intelligence as "Muriel and Sidney Box Mobbed by Fans as Best Original Screenplay Award Announced," or "Thousands Cheer Clemence Dane."

And the sub-head, "'The Play's The Thing,' Maintains Academy Board of Governors," couldn't be found anywhere.

A check-up on the New York papers finds the Writer Awards tucked away in newspaper limbo, hard by the classified ads and the obituaries. The Sun, after distributing Actor, Director and Producer Oscars on its front page, tells us on page 15 that "Minor awards were

announced first." Half a column later a diligent reader of small type comes upon the Writing awards. The Times, on page 25, also buries us under a "Minor Awards" heading. And the News and the Post simply looked the other way.

Perhaps the newspapers found the whole affair too heady for sober reporting. The Journal-American, for instance, presented the Oscar for Direction to "William Russell," evidently borrowing the surname of the handless veteran from the Post, which wasn't using it. That paper carried a still from "Best Years of Our Lives" showing Fredric March congratulating "Harold Oliver."

Actually, the newspapers took their cue from the Academy, which has consistently allowed itself to categorize Writing Awards among the least of its disbursements. At its own function, the Academy made a definite separation between the Writing Awards, which it considered minor, and those for Acting, Directing and Producing. After disposing of such trivia as the citations for Best Film Editing, Best Special Effects, Best Interior Decoration and Best Writing, the announcer on the stage of the Shrine Auditorium proclaimed breathlessly, "And now for the major awards!"

In recent years, to add insult, a number of publications have issued annual awards, and in practically every case there was no indication that the so-called "best pictures" were ever written by anyone. Scripts were manifestly found under a rose, or, in the light of their regard, under a rock. Only Photoplay, which this year added a Writer's Award to its list, was the exception.

In view of all this, our Guild plan for a Writers' Film Award selected by members of the Guild becomes doubly important. Full details concerning this plan will be published in a forthcoming issue. Only through such a medium, it seems, can we make the public — and perhaps even the Academy — aware that the writer's contribution to pictures is as significant as that of the producer, the actor and the director, and slightly more valuable artistically than a line on page 45 of the Daily Blotter would indicate.

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SWG Special Program Committee Presents:

F R A N K L A U N D E R

Writer — Director — producer

By Paul Gangelin

Frank Launder is President of the British Screenwriters Association in London. He is also, in association with Sidney Gilliat, co-writer, co-director and co-producer interchangeably of such films as *Millions Like Us*, *Waterloo Road*, *Notorious Gentleman*, *The Adventuress*, *Green for Danger*, *The Blue Lagoon*, *London Belongs to Me*. With Gilliat he wrote, but did not direct or produce, *The Lady Vanishes* and *Night Train*.

At Lucey's recently Mr. Launder, as proxy of the British screen writers and an outstanding figure in the motion picture field, was introduced to his American colleagues at a cocktail party arranged by the SWG Special Program Committee under the chairmanship of Howard Estabrook. It was a last minute deal, although invitations were broadcast as widely as possible.

Mr. Launder's talk to the group present was an informal first step toward an understanding and a possible eventual working agreement between the Screen Writers' Guild here and the Screen Writers' Association there. This with particular reference to the AAA. The British writers are unanimously and enthusiastically in support of the AAA. They want to work with us and want to be considered in its application. They have, as a matter of fact, progressed further toward its achievement in some respects than we have. Mr. Launder, for instance, estimates

that already, without any contractual commitment between the Producers' Association and the writers, one-third of all stories acquired for motion picture production in England are leased, with the author retaining the rights of sale in other forms.

The conclusion arrived at was that a coordination of the Guild's activities with those of the Association would be of unquestionable value, since today the relations between producing companies in the two countries are growing so close. If we work together, every British writer will support the AAA program by making terms in accordance with it, and the SWG, on its part, will give momentum to the already well-developed tendency to lease material in England. Thus producing companies operating in both countries will be obliged to meet identical terms.

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When Mr. Launder, in response to questions, said that the Association has no contract covering a union shop or a minimum salary clause, there was a general wave of sympathy for our amateur British brethren, until we learned that every writer working on film assignments in Great Britain becomes immediately and voluntarily a member of the Association. That goes for George Bernard Shaw, who pays his dues regularly. As for the minimum — although there is no agreement on paper between writers and producers, the minimum salary at present is £50, or \$200. They're not doing too badly in their own quiet way.

The subject of relations between the Producers' Association and the Writers' Association was a bit of an eye-opener,

PAUL GANGELIN has been a screen writer in Hollywood and London for 25 years. He has served both as a member of the Executive Board of the SWG and of the Council of the British Screenwriters' Association.

too. Asked how the writers enforced their demands on the producers without contractual requirements, Mr. Launder said, "Oh, we just call them up on the phone and raise a hell of a stink, and they say they're sorry and do it our way." The SWG audience gasped at that point, and somebody said, "It's Nirvanah!" Well, maybe only Utopia.

There are several reasons for this amiable relationship. One is that the producers are not as strongly organized as our single-minded phalanx over here. That, however, is not the whole story. In England, as in Europe generally, the producer does not look upon the writer as his natural prey. There is a basic inclination to consider that writers, actors, directors, and cameramen are creative talent essential to the making of motion pictures. The corollary idea follows that they are worth their hire and may even be assets if they are decently treated and happy. An old-fashioned corollary idea, but a pleasant one.

A significant point brought out by Mr. Launder is that in the current development in England many writers have been made producers and directors, and several consequently sit on the committee of the Producers' Association, **but they still think of themselves as being primarily writers.** It would seem that it might be good for the SWG to consider its policy about producer-writers and for individual members so anointed to be allowed to declare themselves as to whether they can impartially continue to serve the Guild.

In the matter of credits, the Screen Writers' Association was successful in demanding billing for the writer equal to that of the director. The producers got around that one slightly by cutting the director's billing to the handy writer's size instead of raising the writer's to the director's, or party, size. However, the Association has won a signal victory in the matter of title cards. By agreement the original basis of a motion picture is accorded a card all to itself, and the screenplay another and separate card.

That is something for the SWG to aim at in a new contract. If any mechanical device can help toward the recognition of the importance of the story in the fabric of a motion picture, this is it.

Something else you'd like to know. It is agreed in England that a writer may be of some help in the actual shooting of a picture. Therefore it is the common, if not the absolutely usual practice, to carry him through at least a good part of the shooting to make what changes may be found to be necessary. Mr. Launder said, "If, for any reason, a writer is not continued through the shooting of his picture we make a stink all around with the Producers' Association, and we usually win, too." (He repeated himself there but remember his talk was extemporaneous).

★

Now we come to the problem of the "fresh mind." They have them in England, but the producer has to show cause. Apparently our producers' system of throwing fresh mind after fresh mind into the breach of a moribund script would bring a sharp telephone call and a raising of that word Mr. Launder used twice before.

Stories written directly for the screen are much more generally used in England than over here. The estimate runs as high as fifty percent of the total of forty to fifty feature pictures produced annually. The prices for material, though, are not to be compared with ours. A reasonable guess at the top price to date would be about £12,000. Most stories sell for very much less, and the present system of contracting with individuals or units for writing, directing, and producing leaves the ingredient of the story in the total deal a matter of bookkeeping.

The makers of documentary films—and in that are included commercials—have their own distinct film association. In the past year there were produced about 150 short subjects of all kinds.

Finally, Mr. Launder said that the Screen Writers' Association believes firmly that all writers should have access

to England. It will give its support to the admission of any foreign writer to work in the country. That does not mean that one can go over there and shop for jobs. In principle the Ministry of Labour rules that priority must be given British subjects. The Association is, nevertheless, hopeful of persuading the Ministry that writing and the admission of writers present an issue distinct from the problems of other groups, such as technical unions, for whose protection the regulations are devised.

Mr. Launder reflected a genuine enthusiasm in Britain for THE SCREEN WRITER, saying that it was eagerly read but hard to come by. He said that it would not be too difficult to get a large subscription list from members of his organization, and steps will be taken to bring this about. At his suggestion, sev-

eral hundred copies of the Supplement on the AAA have been sent to London.

This is a necessarily curtailed report of an unusually stimulating coming-together. It can lead to a greater understanding and greater cooperation internationally, not only between our two groups, but extending indefinitely, for the British Association has already developed contact with continental screen writers and has hope of working in common cause with them.

Those present at the meeting recommended unanimously that we take steps to exchange full membership status with the Screen Writers' Association, and that Howard Estabrook, as Chairman of the SWG Special Programs Committee, be delegated to bring this matter to the attention of the Executive Board.

R E P O R T A N D C O M M E N T

OH, MR. JOHNSTON, OH, MR. BREEN!

By Phyllis L. Cornell

It's the dampness behind the ears that emboldens me to write, the same dampness that prevented me from speaking out in meeting recently, (the meeting addressed by Mr. Eric Johnston,) and still that same dampness that keeps my ignorance green—I do not even know to whom I should address myself.

I have been working out here since February third and everyone who's ever worked out here at all must know the things that loom large and puzzling to new eyes. The thing that's struck me most forcibly, (me and who else, I know . . .) is the obsession with trees, the blindness to the woods. This blindness was most manifest in Mr. Johnston's remarks with regard to both "morality" (in this context, how sex and

alcohol shall be handled cinematically,) and the unarguable desideratum of pleasing foreign markets.

Taking the least important thing first, if no one minds. . . . We are asked to concern ourselves with individual words and actions lest they be suggestive and to concern ourselves to such an extent that we may not show things as they are.

Mr. Johnston cited a scene from a picture I don't know as an example of drinking being dragged in where it had no place, unbelievably. In this scene, a man returning home between twelve and one at night makes himself a night-cap. "Now you know," said Mr. Johnston, "that that isn't normal, wouldn't happen." The hell we do. Nine out of ten of us would make ourselves a drink arriving home any time after five. The tenth any time after noon. "But," Mr. Johnston may object, "that isn't how the people live."

And there's the rub. The movies are

PHYLLIS CORNELL is an associate member of SWG.

not primarily educational, they are entertainment. And almost everyone, for entertainment, seeks unfamiliar scenes and characters. Too, while this generalization may have even more exceptions than most, it is a lamentable fact that by and large, people who drink are more entertaining than people who don't.

So, to please the public, we're likely to find ourselves writing characters who drink, not self-consciously, not to get drunk, (though they probably do, on occasion,) but as naturally and matter-of-factly as they eat. It is to precisely this sort of drinking that the dry elements of our audience object, but they do not themselves recognize their own inconsistency, do not understand that the sort of characters by whom they are intrigued are likely to be moderate to heavy drinkers.

★

Mr. Johnston asked our indulgence while he told us of his problems. I believe that if he realized our problem is to reconcile the audience's own inconsistency for it, he might see better what a good and tasteful job we've done, on the whole. (I have absolutely no right to that "we" — it is a formality, a convenience.) I haven't been around enough to know if Mr. Johnston's suggestion that we have our characters drink in order to occupy their hands is as laughable as it sounds.

We're up against precisely the same problem when it comes to sex. As exceptions, as novelties, one or two pictures showing as much of normal connubial bliss as may be tasteful are acceptable. But on the whole, the public would prefer to see what it doesn't know, deviations, turns and twists. Again, our task is to deal with an unreasonable child. On the one hand, it cries "Let me see what I should else not know," on the other, "Whatever would not normally befall me must be wicked, lewd." Can't you see our problem, Oh, Mr. Johnston, Oh, Mr. Breen?

About two years ago, Henry Morgan

wrote a brilliant article for the New York Sunday Times entitled "What's Wrong With Radio?" He proved conclusively that it was the audience. That's my pitch, too.

Mr. Johnston informed us that we were a long way from full exploitation of our potential market. (Hard to believe, but I'll take his word for it.) It seems to be incontrovertible that the already-exploited fraction of our potential market consists of the young — I heard recently that the average age of any given movie audience is nineteen. Corollary, we must turn to other age-groups. I run true to sex where arithmetic's concerned — mine's lousy, so for all I know, an actuarial table might prove it more profitable to aim at those under nineteen than those over, perhaps there are more of them.

But surely we should aim at people with money and surely money is to be found in the over-nineteen brackets rather than the under-nineteen ones? Surely the way to reach these people is to come a little closer to showing things as they are rather than as a retarded fifteen-year-old hopes they might be, (I have in mind a picture with which it seems to me Mr. Breen was far too gentle . . .)

★

Now, as to foreign markets. Again, Mr. Johnston seems to be concerned with the twig rather than the root. As far as I can gather, the obvious pitfalls we are asked to avoid are flaunting too much plenty in a starving world and using the nationals of other countries as comic characters. But God in Heaven, how shall we not offend, however careful of detail, if we start with the idea that, (and I quote Mr. Johnston,) "America gave to the world the concept of the dignity of man?" Do we claim Plato, Jesus Christ, as 100% red-blooded Americans? I'm not often ashamed of being American but I am today. Rich, fat, unseeing, watched by eyes made bright with hunger, shall we mouth about our gifts? My country's

sins are mine, I have two children for them to be visited on. Mr. Johnston's talk makes me nervous.

For all that, I may say truly to Messrs. Breen and Johnston "I love you, I love you, I love you," for I am young enough that windmills are essential to my happiness.

INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION ON AUTHORS RIGHTS

Authors' rights in the America are now before the Senate. In the summer of 1946 a group of accredited experts in the field of literary property, representing most of the countries in the Western Hemisphere, met in Washington, and drew a Pan-American version of the Berne Convention, that is, a proposed treaty for the protection of authors' rights across national boundaries from the United States south to Paraguay.

The governments of all the countries listed below* have signed the convention, but ratification by the Senate of the United States, necessary before it becomes the law of our land, must first overcome the opposition of motion picture producers and book publishers.

Although the proposed convention is not quite as good as the Berne Convention, it is a far advance in some respects. Highlights are:

International protection for all writings, unpublished as well as published, including by inference screenplays and other works not now subject to copyright.

Protection in all signatory nations of any work which is protected by the laws of any of the countries. Some countries do not now require registration or other formalities. The United States, which does, would be required to give protec-

tion to the works of aliens under circumstances in which it would deny protection to the works of its own citizens. In the long run it is likely that the formalities of registration and the consequent hazards of technical defects would be eliminated in all countries.

Limited protection for the titles of works which have become internationally famous.

An international registry for all works. This is not required for protection, but it would supply an opportunity for the exchange of economic and cultural information and among other things help bring writers' organizations closer together.

Recognition of moral rights. The proposal allows the author to waive the right, which of course may permit nullification in specific cases, but it is nevertheless a far advance over our present system of jurisprudence which does not even know that moral rights exist.

Current reports are that organizations of creators, — the Authors League, Songwriters Protective Association, and ASCAP, — are urging ratification. Although the proposed convention is capable of improvement, it is in the path of progress and all writers should work for its ratification.

M.E.C.

WHY BRITISH PICTURES ARE GOOD

By Archer Winsten

From time to time this reviewer has let it transpire that he has had many of his most pleasant, inspiring and gratified moments watching movies made in Great Britain.

That this is no Anglophile tropism, fixed by pre-school subjection to the works of Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, has been proved by the observation that bad British pictures seem somehow worse, in

*Nicaragua, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Venezuela, Peru, Haiti, Panama, Colombia, Chile, Brazil, Costa Rica, Honduras, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, El Salvador, Cuba, Bolivia, and the United States.

ARCHER WINSTEN is the well known film critic and columnist of the N. Y. Post.

their pride of badness, than bad American films. That it is no sudden fancy is hinted by more than a decade of enthusiasm.

First there was the premiere of Carol Reed's first great picture, "Three On a Weekend" (Bank Holiday in England). It was a terrible flop at what is now the Republic Theatre. Over the years it has had many revivals to the delight of small audiences and the continued applause of this partisan.

Michael Powell made a picture called "The Edge of the World," a lonely, desolate, musically unforgettable picture that stayed in your mind like a lyric poem. Hitchcock made "The 39 Steps." Carol Reed made "Night Train." It was obvious in those years before the war that **the few good British pictures had a quality and an integrity of the mind that perhaps no American picture could match.**

About that time "The Stars Look Down" was made. When it came to be shown in this country, a couple of years late, it had been blanketed by the superior exploitation of "How Green Was My Valley." Despite the persistent cry of a few, including this reviewer, "The Stars" never had the popularity its unrelenting realism of the coal mines, its topical subject, and its truly great picture-making deserved. There have been many who think that this was not only Carol Reed's greatest picture, but also the greatest single film ever made anywhere.

Last Year's British Flood

This last year brought a quickening of the stream of superior British films. Instead of coming one or two every two or three years, they came five or six in a single year. It was duly noted, praised in the proper season, and enjoyed throughout. But it has remained for a **British producer writing in a recent Screen Writer, that cinematically indispensable publication of the Screen Writers' Guild, to say how and why this has happened. Very significantly the author is I. G. Goldsmith, producer of "The Stars Look Down."**

He writes, "British producers . . . have come to look upon the work of the writer as the axis upon which the talents and labor of all these others resolve. 'In the beginning was the word' . . . in the discovery and re-affirmation of this profound truth the British film industry has gained profit as well as glory."

Mr. Goldsmith also makes this same point in other words. At another point he pays tribute to J. Arthur Rank as a rich man who remains humble and helpful in the face of creative work. His final statement warns against the inroads promoters and salesmen can make even into the art-sacred precincts of British movies.

One cannot avoid noticing that his pro-author sentiment is being printed in a writers' magazine for an audience of screen writers. But that does not affect two bald facts. First, British films have spurted during the past two years. Second, an explanation is overdue.

At another point in Goldsmith's article, which by the way is entitled "Made in England," he writes a few more words placing the writer in a position of greater importance than he has found in Hollywood. I might add that until a better explanation comes along this will be accepted as the most reasonable analysis, in simple terms, of obvious, visible differences between Hollywood and British films.

"Today British films, good and bad, are remarkably different from American and French films," writes Mr. Goldsmith. "They show individuality and originality. They are not merely monotonous replicas of the films from the neighbors' shops. Because the writer is given his proper place in the making of films, the work of everyone else in the industry has been enhanced."

This may not be all the truth, but it sounds like the whole truth in describing one conscious factor at work in England lifting their motion picture production above the deeply rutted trails of this world-wide industry-art.

(Reprinted from the New York Post.)

N E W S N O T E S

★ Current programs in the N. Y. Museum of Modern Art's History of the Motion Picture are: The Musical Film (II): Mother Goose Goes Hollywood; One Hundred Men and a Girl, May 2, 3, 4; The Social Film (V): Confessions of a Nazi Spy, May 5, 6, 7, 8; American Film Comedy (XVIII): Destry Rides Again, May 9, 10, 11; The American Documentary Film (III): May 12, 13, 14, 15; The American Documentary Film (IV): People of the Cumberland, Power and the Land, The Land, May 16, 17, 18; The Social Film (IV): How Green Was My Valley, May 19, 20, 21, 22; The American Documentary Film (V): Native Land, May 23, 24, 25; Mystery and Violence (V): The Maltese Falcon, May 26, 27, 28, 29; The American Documentary Film (VI): Sweeney Steps Out, Library of Congress, The Cummington Story, A Better Tomorrow, The Window Cleaner, May 30, 31, June 1.

★ SWG member Arthur Strawn has sold a short story to the Saturday Evening Post. Title of the fiction piece: Foolish Old Man.

★ Simon & Schuster announce signing of contract with SWG member Charles O'Neill for publication early in 1948 of his novel, Morning Time, a story of early

America during the formative years of the nation.

★ SWG member Craig Rice is editor of a factual crime anthology, Los Angeles Murders, due for publication in June by Duell, Sloan & Pearce. Contributors are Charles G. Booth, Mary Collins, Guy Endore, Erle Stanley Gardiner, Geoffrey Homes, Eugene Williams, George Worthing Yates. Joseph Henry Jackson, the literary critic, is editing a companion volume of San Francisco murders, due in May.

★ Flannigan's Folly, a new novel by SWG member George Milburn, has just been published under the imprint of Whittlesey House.

★ Jessyca Russell, editor and publisher of Writers Newsletter, wants news from writers covering data on their sales—titles, agents making sale, etc. She features this news, including sales by screen writers of originals, books, short stories, plays, etc., to movies. Address of her publication, which is one of the few writers' sheets plugging the American Authors' Authority, is 47 W. 56th st., New York 19.

★ SWG member Harry Essex has recently sold two short pieces to The

SCREEN WRITERS' GUILD STUDIO CHAIRMEN

COLUMBIA — Mel Levy; Ray Schrock, alternate.

MGM — Gladys Lehman, chairman; Sidney Boehm, Marvin Borowsky, Anne Chapin, Margaret Fitts, Charles Kaufman.

REPUBLIC — Franklin Adreon; alternate, John K. Butler.

20th CENTURY-FOX — Wanda Tuchock; alternate, Robert Murphy.

WARNER BROS. — John Collier.

PARAMOUNT — Arthur Sheekman; alternate, Jesse Lasky, Jr.

UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL — Silvia Richards; alternates, Howard Dimsdale, Ian Hunter.

RKO — Daniel Mainwaring; alternate, Bess Taffel.

American Hebrew: The Kill, published in February, and Nevermore a Baby, in the April issue.

★ World Premiere of *Oh Susanna*, by SWG members Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements and based on the life of Stephen Foster, with generous use of his songs, is scheduled for the Pasadena Playhouse May 14 to 25. George Phelps will direct. The production will conclude the Playhouse spring series. From April 30 to May 11 the Guy Andres comedy, *Yankee Fable*, will be the Playhouse attraction.

★ *The Harder They Fall*, SWG member Budd Schulberg's new novel about the fight game, is scheduled for Random House publication this fall.

★ Martha Foley has chosen SWG member Samson Raphaelson's story, *The Greatest Idea in the World*, published in *Good Housekeeping* last November, for inclusion in the 1947 edition of *Best American Short Stories* (Houghton, Mifflin). Raphaelson is expanding his current *Good Housekeeping* fiction series into a novel to be published by Random House.

★ The Department of State reports very favorable reactions in Vienna to the revival of Emmet Lavery's *The First Legion*. Lavery's *The Magnificent Yankee*, now at the Biltmore Theatre here with Louis Calhern and Sylvia Field, is scheduled for production at the Burgtheatre in Vienna this spring.

★ The Fordham University Theatre, now under the direction of SWG associate member Albert McCleery, announces a summer seminar in which leading Broadway producers and playwrights will participate. New scripts from members of the Screen Writers Guild will receive a prompt and cordial reading. Serving on the Advisory Council of the Fordham Theatre, now in its seventy-fifth year, is SWG President Emmet Lavery, an alumnus of Fordham University Law School.

★ The Peoples Educational Center be-

gan its Spring Term the week of April 14th. Courses include Motion Picture Direction with Herbert Biberman, Vincent Sherman, Irving Pichel, Edward Dmytryk and others. Screen Writing classes are handled by Carl Foreman and Robert Lees; Radio Writing Comedy by Louis Quinn; Radio Writing Dramatic by Merwin Gerard and Seeleg Lester. Guy Endore and John Sanford give the Novel Workshop course. A new course for the Center is Publicity and Public Relations, with a panel of lecturers drawn from active screen publicists. There is a course in Folk Music and Peoples Songs Today, Realism in the American Film, and a wide variety of courses in social and labor problems, art, music and dance. For further information write or phone Peoples Educational Center, 1717 North Vine Street, Hollywood 6291.

★ American Gallery Films and the Peoples Educational Center are co-sponsoring a new series of ten film showings on Friday nights at 8:15. The showings will be given at the Screen Cartoonists Hall, corner of Vine and Yucca. Under the series title "Realism in the American Film," it is planned to give a comprehensive survey of outstanding American problem films. The films and dates are as follows:

May 2nd	Underworld
May 9th	I Am a Fugitive From A Chain Gang
May 16th	Wild Boys of the Road
May 23rd	Our Daily Bread
May 30th	You Only Live Once
June 6th	A Man to Remember
June 13th	Of Mice and Men
June 20th	Native Land

★ Cinema, a new monthly magazine in the film field, is scheduled to make its first appearance this month. The editors, Eli Willis, Dana Kingsley and Herbert F. Margolis, announce that it will not be a fan or trade publication but an adult magazine for intelligent movie audiences.

★ SWG member MacKinlay Kantor's new novel, *But Look, The Morn*, is on the Coward-McCann spring list.

★ Sylvia Regan, associate SWG member, will have a new play, *Safe Harbor*, on Broadway this spring. It is being produced by Barnard Straus and Roland Haas, and directed by Rose Franken. Miss Regan's recent play, *Morning Star*, entered in the British Drama Festival Tournament by the Glasgow Institute Players, won the Scottish laurels. It is now in a play-off against the English entry.

★ *The Boy Who Owned An Elephant*, a book-length story, by Malvin Wald, has been published in the February issue of *Story Parade*, one of America's leading children's magazines.

STATEMENT ON ADVERTISING POLICY

A limited amount of advertising will be accepted by THE SCREEN WRITER.

Its pages will be open to agents, publishers, transportation companies, hotels, banks, public utilities, merchants and other advertisers who wish to reach its specialized audience of writers and other industry people.

All advertising copy will be subject to the approval of the SWG Editorial Committee. Rates and mechanical requirements will be sent on request to THE SCREEN WRITER, 1655 N. Cherokee ave., Hollywood 28, Calif.

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THE SWG SHORT PLAY CONTEST

Milton Krims, chairman of the SWG Short Play Award Contest, has issued the following statement:

The Short Play Contest has been discontinued, primarily because of lack of support from the Screen Writers' Guild membership. The Committee recognizes the reasons, good and bad, for the obvious disinterest in this proposed activity and feels no further effort should be made to keep it alive, unless the membership by active participation indicates otherwise.

The Committee wishes to thank those few who contributed plays. It apologizes for the long delay in acknowledging their sincere effort to support a truly cultural activity. Their plays will be returned to them, not because they are unworthy of production but because not enough were submitted to make this a real contest.

The Committee stands ready to revive this program should enough of the Screen Writers' Guild membership so desire.

★ ★ ★

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

The following communication has been received from William Dieterle:

On our recent trip through Germany and Austria we found the clothing condition of the actors and actresses of stage and screen really appalling. Some of them were bombed out several times or lost their belongings through other blows which the war brought about.

We should not forget that many of them had bravely fought Nazism from inside as we did from the outside and, therefore, came out of concentration camps with nothing but rags on their bodies.

We turn to you because your members might have an understanding of the situation remembering how often the German stage and screen were in the vanguard in presenting American plays. In the present situation where the influence of stage and screen cannot be stressed enough, their work is endangered since actors cannot perform because of a complete lack of clothing.

We ask the American writers to help in going through their wardrobes and discarding things they can do without or else to contribute a check so that we can cover the transport expenses or buy shoes or clothing at the Goodwill stores for very little money.

If your members call **Santa Monica 5-4943** or **Gladstone 9411** we shall send some one to pick up the items to be contributed. Checks should be made out to Mrs. William Dieterle, **P.O.B. 272, Canoga Park, Calif.**

The goods will be shipped via Switzerland to the Theatrical Guild in Berlin, which in turn will distribute the clothing only to those people who are cleared by the U. S. Military Government in Germany.

WILLIAM DIETERLE

When Magazine Digest began dropping writers' by-lines from its articles, SWG wrote a letter of objection. The following replies have been received:

Screen Writers Guild, Inc.:

Replying to your recent letter, Magazine Digest does give credit to the authors of the articles that we have reviewed.

We have discontinued the practice of giving a by-line under the title of the article but you will always find the author given credit in the body of our articles.

MAGAZINE DIGEST PUBLISHING CO., LTD.,

M. Simmons
General Manager.

In response to another SWG protest, this letter has been received:

Screen Writers Guild, Inc.:

We appreciate the objections of the Screen Writers' Guild to the practices engaged in by Magazine Digest for a period whereby bylines were omitted from magazines. We should like to explain the reason for this.

This publication has launched a new editorial policy whereby the "digest" article has been abolished. In its place, we have substituted a review type of treatment wherein usually a minimum of two and frequently as many as eight articles are reviewed in a single piece of writing. Since these review treatments are handled by our staff of editorial writers much as Time writers handle their material, it was decided to omit bylines. However, this decision has since been modified and bylines will again appear in part in Magazine Digest in those instances where they are warranted.

ANNE FROMER
Managing Editor

A LISTING OF SCREEN WRITERS' CREDITS
EARNED ON FEATURE PRODUCTIONS
OF CURRENT AND RECENT RELEASE

CREDITS

FEBRUARY 1, 1947 TO APRIL 1, 1947

A

FRANKLYN ADREON

Joint Original Screenplay (with Basil Dickey, Jesse Duffy and Sol Shor) **THE BLACK WIDOW**, Rep

ZOE AKINS

Joint Screenplay (with Sonya Levien)
A WOMAN OF MY OWN, MGM

JACK ANDREWS

Joint Original Screenplay (with Harry Ruskin) **DARK DELUSION**, MGM

ROBERT D. ANDREWS

*Contributor to Screenplay **THREE WERE THOROUGHBREDS**, Col

JOSEPH ANSEN

Joint Original Story and Screenplay (with David Barclay) **NEIGHBOR PESTS** (S) MGM
Joint Original Story and Screenplay (with David Barclay) **I LOVE MY WIFE** — BUT (S) MGM
Joint Screenplay (with David Barclay) **ATHLETIC** (S) MGM
Joint Screenplay (with David Barclay) **DIAMOND DEMON** (S) MGM
Joint Screenplay (with David Barclay) **EARLY SPORTS QUIZ** (S) MGM

ART ARTHUR

Joint Screenplay (with Rowland Leigh)
HEAVEN ONLY KNOWS (Nero Films) UA

B

GRAHAM BAKER

Joint Screenplay (with Jack Moffitt and Cecile Kramer) **RAMROD** (Sherman) UA

ARNOLD BELGARD

Joint Screenplay (with Jack Jevne) **FABULOUS JOE**, Roach

CHARLES BENNETT

Sole Screenplay **IVY**, Uni-Int'l

*Academy Bulletin Only

EDMUND BELOIN

Joint Original Screenplay (with Jack Rose)
ROAD TO RIO, Par

LEONARDO BERCOVICI

Sole Screenplay **THE LOST LOVE**, Uni-Int'l

TOM BLACKBURN

Joint Original Screenplay (with Fenton Earnshaw) **KILLER AT LARGE**, PRC

WILLIAM BOWERS

Joint Screenplay (with Bertram Millhauser)
THE DARK WEB, Uni-Int'l
Joint Screenplay (with Harry Kurnitz)
SOMETHING IN THE WIND, Uni-Int'l

MALCOLM STUART BOYLAN

Joint Screenplay (with Lawrence E. Watkins) **KEEPER OF THE BEES**, Col

GEORGE BRANDT

Sole Original Screenplay **POPULAR SCIENCE**
J 6-2, J 6-3, J 6-4, J 6-5 (S) Par
Sole Original Screenplay **UNUSUAL OCCUPATIONS** L 6-2, L 6-3, L 6-4 (S) Par

OSCAR BRODNEY

Joint Original Screenplay (with Warren Wilson) **IF YOU KNEW SUSIE**, RKO

RICHARD BROOKS

Sole Screenplay **BRUTE FORCE**, Uni-Int'l
Novel Basis **CROSSFIRE**, RKO

W. R. BURNETT

Sole Screenplay **VENDETTA** (Howard Hughes) UA

JOHN K. BUTLER

Joint Original Screenplay (with Earle Snell)
ROBINHOOD OF TEXAS, Rep

C

TAYLOR CAVEN

Joint Screenplay (with Paul Gerard Smith and Ewing Scott) **UNTAMED FURY**, PRC

WHITMAN CHAMBERS

Sole Screenplay **JUNGLE FLIGHT** (Pine Thomas) Par
Sole Original Screenplay **I COVER BIG TOWN** (Pine Thomas) Par

In this listing of credits, published every other month in **THE SCREEN WRITER**, the following abbreviations are used: COL — Columbia Pictures Corporation; E-L — Eagle-Lion Studios; FOX — 20th Century-Fox Film Corporation; GOLDWYN — Samuel Goldwyn Productions, Inc.; MGM — Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios; MONO — Monogram Pictures Corporation; PAR — Paramount Pictures, Inc.; PRC — Producers Releasing Corporation of America; REP — Republic Productions, Inc.; RKO — RKO Radio Studios, Inc.; ROACH — Hal E. Roach Studio, Inc.; UA — United Artists Corporation; UNI-INT'L — Universal-International Pictures; UWP — United World Pictures; WB — Warner Brothers Studios. (S) designates screen short.

ANNE MORRISON CHAPIN

Joint Screenplay (with Whitfield Cook and Cyril Hume) HIGH BARBAREE, MGM

BORDEN CHASE

Joint Screenplay (with John Twist) TYCOON, RKO

ROBERT CHURCHILL

Joint Original Screenplay (with Elmer Clifton) WEST TO GLORY, PRC

ELMER CLIFTON

Joint Original Screenplay (with Robert Churchill) WEST TO GLORY, PRC

HARRY CLORK

Joint Original Screenplay (with Wm. R. Lipman and Grant Garrett) THE MIGHTY MCGURK, MGM

ROYAL K. COLE

Additional Dialogue ALONG THE OREGON TRAIL, Rep

WHITFIELD COOK

Joint Screenplay (with Cyril Hume and Anne Morrison Chapin) HIGH BARBAREE, MGM

HARRY CRANE

Joint Additional Dialogue (with James O'Hanlon) SONG OF THE THIN MAN, MGM

IRVING CUMMINGS, JR.

Joint Screenplay (with Irving Elman and Robert G. North) and Joint Original Story (with Robert G. North) JEWELS OF BRANDBURG (Sol M. Wurtzel) Fox

D

SCOTT DARLING

Joint Adaptation (with Fred Myton) TOO MANY SINNERS, PRC

JACK DEWITT

Joint Original Screenplay (with Renault Duncan) BELLS OF SAN FERNANDO, Screen Guild

KAREN DEWOLF

Sole Screenplay STEPCCHILD (Eagle Lion) PRC

BASIL DICKEY

Joint Original Screenplay (with Franklyn Adreon, Jesse Duffy and Sol Shor) THE BLACK WIDOW, Rep

JESSE DUFFY

Joint Original Screenplay (with Franklyn Adreon, Basil Dickey and Sol Shor) THE BLACK WIDOW, Rep

E

KENNETH EARL

Sole Story WHIPLASH, WB

FENTON EARNSHAW

Joint Original Screenplay (with Tom Blackburn) KILLER AT LARGE, PRC

SAUL ELKINS

Sole Original Screenplay THE RACE RIDERS (S) WB
Sole Original Screenplay A BOY AND HIS DOG (S) WB

Sole Original Screenplay CELEBRATION DAYS (S) WB

Sole Original Screenplay THE SOAP BOX DERBY (S) WB

Sole Original Screenplay A DAY AT THE FAIR (S) WB

Sole Original Screenplay KING OF THE CARNIVAL (S) WB

Sole Original Screenplay POWER BEHIND THE NATION (S) WB

Sole Original Screenplay RHYTHM OF A BIG CITY (S) WB

IRVING ELMAN

Joint Screenplay (with Charles Kenyon) STRANGE JOURNEY (Sol M. Wurtzel) Fox

Sole Original Screenplay BACKLASH (Sol M. Wurtzel) Fox

Joint Screenplay (with Irving Cummings, Jr. and Robert G. North) JEWELS OF BRANDBURG (Sol M. Wurtzel) Fox

Sole Original Screenplay THE CRIMSON KEY (Sol M. Wurtzel) Fox

CYRIL ENDFIELD

Sole Original Screenplay HARD BOILED MAHONEY, Mono

HENRY EPHRON

Joint Screenplay (with Phoebe Ephron) WALLFLOWER, WB

PHOEBE EPHRON

Joint Screenplay (with Henry Ephron) WALLFLOWER, WB

F

STEVE FISHER

Joint Screenplay (with Nat Perrin) SONG OF THE THIN MAN, MGM

LADISLAS FODOR

Joint Screenplay (with Harry Brown) THE OTHER LOVE (Enterprise) UA

HARRIET FRANK, JR.

Joint Screenplay (with Maurice J. Geraghty) WHIPLASH, WB

Joint Screenplay (with George B. Seitz, Jr.) A REALLY IMPORTANT PERSON (S) MGM

G

ERWIN GELSEY

Joint Original Story (with Jerry Sackheim) FINGER WOMAN, Rep

MAURICE J. GERAGHTY

Joint Screenplay (with Dorothy Reid) WHO KILLED DOC ROBBIN, Roach

Joint Screenplay (with Harriet Frank, Jr.) WHIPLASH, WB

MORTON GRANT

Joint Screenplay (with Dalton Reymond and Maurice Raff) SONG OF THE SOUTH, Disney

ELEANORE GRIFFIN

Joint Screenplay (with Harry Ruskin) TENTH AVENUE ANGEL, MGM

JERRY GRUSKIN

Sole Screenplay FINGER WOMAN, Rep

H

DASHIELL HAMMETT

Characters Basis SONG OF THE THIN MAN, MGM

JULIAN HARMON

Joint Original Story (with Maxwell Shane) SEVEN WERE SAVED (Pine Thomas) Par

PATRICIA HARPER

Sole Screenplay BORDER FEUD, PRC
Sole Original Screenplay GHOST TOWN RENEGADES, PRC
Sole Original Screenplay RANGE BEYOND THE BLUE, PRC

CARL K. HITTLEMAN

Sole Original Story and Joint Screenplay (with Ande Lamb) THE CASE OF THE BABY SITTER (Screen Art) Screen Guild
Sole Original Story and Joint Screenplay (with Don Martin) THE HAT BOX MYSTERY (Screen Art) Screen Guild

DOANE R. HOAG

Sole Screenplay THE LUCKIEST GUY IN THE WORLD (S) MGM

BERT HORSWELL

Sole Story SWING THE WESTERN WAY, Col

CYRIL HUME

Joint Screenplay (with Anne Morrison Chapin and Whitfield Cook) HIGH BARBAREE, MGM

JOHN HUSTON

Sole Screenplay TREASURE OF THE SIERRA MADRE, WB

I

BORIS INGSTER

Sole Original Story and Joint Screenplay (with Alexander Knox) INDIAN SUMMER, RKO

J

JACK JEVNE

Joint Screenplay (with Arnold Belgard) FABULOUS JOE, Roach

AGNES CHRISTINE JOHNSTON

Sole Screenplay BLACK GOLD, Mono

K

ABEN KANDEL

Sole Story HIGH CONQUEST, Mono

FRANCES KAVANAUGH

Sole Original Screenplay WILD WEST, PRC

CHARLES KENYON

Sole Original Story and Joint Screenplay (with Irving Elman) STRANGE JOURNEY (Sol M. Wurtzel) Fox

MIRIAM KISSINGER

Sole Original Screenplay THE TRAP, Mono

LAWRENCE KIMBLE

Sole Screenplay THE OUTCAST, Rep

ALEXANDER KNOX

Joint Screenplay (with Boris Ingster) INDIAN SUMMER, RKO

CECILE KRAMER

Joint Screenplay (with Graham Baker and Jack Moffitt) RAMROD (Sherman) UA
*Contributor to Screenplay ALBUQUERQUE (Pine Thomas) Par

JOSEPH KRUMGOLD

Joint Original Story (with Robert Riskin) MAGIC TOWN, RKO

HARRY KURNITZ

Story Basis THE DARK WEB, Uni-Int'l
Joint Screenplay (with William Bowers) SOMETHING IN THE WIND, Uni-Int'l

L

ANDE LAMB

Joint Screenplay (with Carl K. Hittleman) THE CASE OF THE BABY SITTER (Screen Art) Screen Guild

RICHARD H. LANDAU

Joint Story (with Laurence Stallings) CHRISTMAS EVE (Miracle Prods.) UA

DAVID LANG

Sole Original Story JUNGLE FLIGHT (Pine Thomas) Par

LOUIS LANTZ

Joint Original Screenplay (with Stanley Rubin) VIOLENCE, Mono

JONATHAN LATIMER

Sole Screenplay THE BIG CLOCK, Par

ALAN LEMAY

Sole Screenplay THE GUNFIGHTERS (Producers-Actors) Col

SONYA LEVIN

Joint Screenplay (with Zoe Akins) A WOMAN OF MY OWN, MGM

ALBERT LEWIN

Sole Screenplay THE PRIVATE AFFAIRS OF BEL AMI, UA

GENE LEWIS

Joint Screenplay (with Clarence Upson Young) ALBUQUERQUE (Pine Thomas) Par

WILLIAM R. LIPMAN

Joint Original Screenplay (with Harry Clork and Grant Garrett) THE MIGHTY MCGURK, MGM

LEE LOEB

Sole Original Story and Joint Screenplay (with Mary Loos and Richard Sale) CALENDAR GIRL, Rep

MARY LOOS

Joint Screenplay (with Richard Sale and Lee Loeb) CALENDAR GIRL, Rep

Mc

DORRELL MCGOWAN

Joint Adaptation (with Stuart McGowan) FINGER WOMAN, Rep
Joint Original Story (with Stuart McGowan) SADDLE PALMS, Rep

*Academy Bulletin Only

JOHN McGOWAN

Sole Original Story IT HAPPENED IN BROOKLYN, MGM

ROBERT F. McGOWAN

Sole Original Story WHO KILLED DOC ROBBIN, Roach

STUART McGOWAN

Joint Adaptation (with Dorrell McGowan) FINGER WOMAN, Rep
Joint Original Story (with Dorrell McGowan) SADDLE PALS, Rep

M

RANALD MACDOUGALL

Sole Screenplay THE UNSUSPECTED, WB

DON MARTIN

Joint Screenplay (with Carl K. Hittleman) THE HAT BOX MYSTERY (Screen Art) Screen Guild

BESS MEREDYTH

Sole Adaptation THE UNSUSPECTED, WB

SETON I. MILLER

Sole Original Story and Joint Screenplay (with Robert Thoren) SINGAPORE, Uni-Int'l

WINSTON MILLER

Sole Screenplay THREE WERE THOROUGH-BREDS, Col

BERTRAM MILLHAUSER

Joint Screenplay (with William Bowers) THE DARK WEB, Uni-Int'l

JACK MOFFITT

Joint Screenplay (with Graham Baker and Cecile Kramer) RAMROD (Sherman) UA

FRED MYTON

Sole Screenplay THREE ON A TICKET, PRC
Joint Adaptation (with Scott Darling) TOO MANY SINNERS, PRC

N

ROBERT G. NORTH

Joint Screenplay (with Irving Cummings, Jr. and Irving Elman) and Joint Original Story (with Irving Cummings, Jr.) JEWELS OF BRANDENBURG (Sol M. Wurtzel) Fox

O

ARCH OBOLER

Sole Screenplay THE ARNELO AFFAIR, MGM

PETER O'CROTTY

Sole Adaptation VENDETTA (Howard Hughes) UA

JOSEPH O'DONNELL

Sole Original Story BORDER FEUD, PRC

JAMES O'HANLON

Joint Additional Dialogue (with Harry Crane) SONG OF THE THIN MAN, MGM

CHARLES O'NEAL

Joint Original Story (with Fritz Rotter) SOMETHING IN THE WIND, Uni-Int'l

SEENA OWEN

Sole Original Story CARNEGIE HALL (Federal Films)

P

EDWARD E. PARAMORE

*Contributor to Screenplay SEA OF GRASS, MGM

JOHN PAXTON

Sole Screenplay CROSSFIRE, RKO

HYMAN PEARSON

Joint Additional Dialogue (with Lester A. White) IF YOU KNEW SUSIE, RKO

NAT PERRIN

Joint Screenplay (with Steve Fisher) SONG OF THE THIN MAN, MGM

WILFRID H. PETTITT

Sole Original Screenplay THE SWORDSMAN, Col

ROBERT PRESNELL, SR.

Sole Screenplay THE GUILTY, Mono

R

MARTIN RACKIN

Sole Original Screenplay RIFF-RAFF, RKO

MAURICE RAPP

Joint Screenplay (with Dalton Reymond and Morton Grant) SONG OF THE SOUTH, Disney

DOROTHY REID

Joint Screenplay (with Maurice J. Geraghty) WHO KILLED DOC ROBBIN, Roach

EDWARD EARL REPP

Sole Original Screenplay THE FIGHTING FRONTIERSMAN, Col

DALTON REYMOND

Sole Original Story and Joint Screenplay (with Morton Grant and Maurice Rapp) SONG OF THE SOUTH, Disney

CRAIG RICE

Joint Story Basis (with Agna Enters) TENTH AVENUE ANGEL, MGM

SILVIA RICHARDS

Sole Screenplay THE SECRET BEYOND THE DOOR, Uni-Int'l

ROBERT RISKIN

Sole Screenplay and Joint Original Story (with Joseph Krumgold) MAGIC TOWN, RKO

CASEY ROBINSON

Sole Adaptation A WOMAN OF MY OWN, MGM

MARGUERITE ROBERTS

Joint Screenplay (with Vincent Lawrence) SEA OF GRASS, MGM

STANLEY ROBERTS

Story Basis SONG OF THE THIN MAN, MGM

JACK ROSE

Joint Original Screenplay (with Edmund Beloin) ROAD TO RIO, Par

RALPH ROSE, JR.

Sole Adaptation KEEPER OF THE BEES, Col

FRITZ ROTTER

Joint Original Story (with Charles O'Neal) SOMETHING IN THE WIND, Uni-Int'l

STANLEY RUBIN

Joint Original Screenplay (with Louis Lantz) VIOLENCE, Mono

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HARRY RUSKIN

Joint Original Screenplay (with Jack Andrews) **DARK DELUSION**, MGM
 Joint Screenplay (with Eleanore Griffin) **TENTH AVENUE ANGEL**, MGM

TIM RYAN

Joint Additional Dialogue (with Edmond Seward) **HARD BOILED MAHONEY**, Mono

S**JERRY SACKHEIM**

Joint Original Story (with Erwin Gelsey) **FINGER WOMAN**, Rep
 Joint Screenplay (with Robert C. Williams) **SADDLE PALS**, Rep

RICHARD SALE

Joint Screenplay (with Mary Loos and Lee Loeb) **CALENDAR GIRL**, Rep

BARNEY SARECKY

Joint Original Screenplay (with Fran Gilbert) **BUFFALO BILL RIDES AGAIN**, Screen Guild

JACK SCHOLL

Sole Original Screenplay **LET'S SING A SONG ABOUT THE WEST** (S) WB
 Sole Original Screenplay **LET'S SING AN OLD TIME FAVORITE** (S) WB
 Sole Original Screenplay **LET'S SING A SONG ABOUT THE MOONLIGHT** (S) WB
 Sole Original Screenplay **LET'S SING A SONG ABOUT THE MOVIES** (S) WB

GEORGE B. SEITZ, JR.

Joint Screenplay (with Harriet Frank, Jr.) **A REALLY IMPORTANT PERSON** (S) MGM

MAXWELL SHANE

Sole Screenplay and Joint Original Story (with Julian Harmon) **SEVEN WERE SAVED** (Pine Thomas) Par
 Sole Screenplay **FEAR IN THE NIGHT** (Pine Thomas) Par

ROBERT T. SHANNON

Sole Original Story **THE OUTCAST**, Rep

BARRY SHIPMAN

Sole Screenplay **SWING THE WESTERN WAY**, Col

SOL SHOR

Joint Original Screenplay (with Franklyn Adreon, Basil Dickey and Jesse Duffy) **THE BLACK WIDOW**, Rep

CHARLES SHOWS

Joint Original Screenplay (with Lou Lilly) **COUNTRY LIFE** (S) Par
 Joint Original Screenplay (with Lou Lilly) **THEY'RE NOT SO DUMB** (S) Par

MICHAEL L. SIMMONS

Joint Original Screenplay **SOUTH OF THE CHISHOLM TRAIL**, Col

PAUL GERARD SMITH

Joint Screenplay (with Ewing Scott and Taylor Caven) **UNTAMED FURY**, PRC

EARLE SNELL

Sole Original Screenplay **ALONG THE OREGON TRAIL**, Rep
 Joint Original Screenplay (with John K. Butler) **ROBINHOOD OF TEXAS**, Rep

LAURENCE STALLINGS

Sole Screenplay and Joint Story (with Richard H. Landau) **CHRISTMAS EVE** (Miracle Prods.) UA

SIDNEY SUTHERLAND

Joint Screenplay (with Caryl Coleman) **WIFE WANTED**, Mono

T**CHARLES L. TEDFORD**

Sole Original Screenplay **HOLIDAY FOR SPORTS** (S) WB
 Sole Original Screenplay **GAUCHOS OF THE PAMPAS** (S) WB
 Sole Original Screenplay **RIDE, RANCHERO, RIDE** (S) WB
 Sole Original Screenplay **WHAT'S HATCHIN'** (S) WB

ROBERT THOEREN

Joint Screenplay (with Seton I. Miller) **SINGAPORE, Uni-Int'l**

MAX TRELL

Sole Screenplay **HIGH CONQUEST**, Mono

JOHN TWIST

Joint Screenplay (with Borden Chase) **TYCOON**, RKO

W**LAWRENCE E. WATKIN**

Joint Screenplay (with Malcolm Stuart Boylan) **KEEPER OF THE BEES**, Col

ROBERT WATSON

*Contributor to Dialogue **BOB, SON OF BATTLE**, Fox

FRANK WEAD

Sole Screenplay **THE BEGINNING OR THE END**, MGM

EDWIN V. WESTRATE

Sole Original Screenplay **SHOOT TO KILL**, Screen Guild
 Sole Original Screenplay **RENEGADE GIRL**, Screen Guild
 Sole Screenplay **ROLLING HOME**, Screen Guild

JOHN WEXLEY

Sole Screenplay **THE LONG NIGHT**, RKO

LESTER A. WHITE

Joint Additional Dialogue (with Hyman Pearson) **IF YOU KNEW SUSIE**, RKO

CRANE WILBUR

Sole Original Story and Screenplay **THE DEVIL ON WHEELS**, PRC

ROBERT C. WILLIAMS

Joint Screenplay (with Jerry Sackheim) **SADDLE PALS**, Rep

AUBREY WISBERG

Sole Original Story **HEAVEN ONLY KNOWS** (Nero Films) UA

GILBERT WRIGHT

Additional Dialogue **BLACK GOLD**, Mono

Y**CLARENCE UPSON YOUNG**

Joint Screenplay (with Gene Lewis) **ALBUQUERQUE** (Pine Thomas) Par
 Sole Screenplay **RIDING THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL**, Mono

*Academy Bulletin Only

Analysis of Volume Two of The Screen Writer

The second volume of *The Screen Writer*, June, 1946 through May, 1947 (12 issues and a supplement), comprises 718 pages.

These pages include some 84 major articles, 78 with bylines, 6 without, the number of authors of these pieces totalling 97 (counting several collaborations and two symposia).

Other contents:

Filler articles, 48, without bylines

Report and Comment (called "Communications," June to September), 29 pieces, with bylines

Correspondence, 15, with bylines

Bulletin headlines, 32

Newsnotes, 211 items

List of Credits, 7

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The volume thus includes over 450 separate units, of 10 classifications, representing the work of over 140 writers.

As to subject matter of the major articles and communications, it ranges from acting to writing, with all phases and fields of screen writing between, and in general it reflects the preference of the Guild members and subscribers for material on writers' economics and craft problems as evidenced by returns from the recent questionnaire. On the former, volume two contains 9 pieces on the minimum wage and basic agreement, 3 on flat deals, 3 on percentage deals, 4 on salaries, 11 on writers' rights, not counting some 58 index entries on the AAA, and 2 charts and a table on employment. Concerning craft problems, some 10 items classify as screen writing technique.

Two of the many major subjects included are Labor Problems (5 articles on labor disputes, 5 on trade unionism, with others on arbitration and conciliation, etc.); and Credits (5 major articles, with others on writers' recognition and awards).

The volume also treats of Foreign Pictures, countries represented including France, England, Italy, Russia, Mexico, Germany and Czechoslovakia.

Types of motion pictures come in for an adequate measure of representation, with separate items on documentaries, training films, action and cowboy pictures, etc.; and the volume includes some prose and verse on Hollywood and its ways.

— HARRIS GABLE

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THE SCREEN WRITER

VOLUME TWO

Index to Authors, Titles, Subjects

Titles of complete articles and communications appear in bold face type. References to individuals are labelled "ref." Motion picture titles are quoted.

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